



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600055514Q

212



BODLEIAN LIBRARY

GONZALO DE BALDIVIA.

A ROMANTIC LEGEND.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

GONZALO DE BALDIVIA;

OR,

A WIDOW'S VOW.

A Romantic Legend

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

Inscribed,

BY PERMISSION,

To WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, Esq.

By the AUTHOR OF

CAMBRIAN PICTURES, SICILIAN MYSTERIES, CONVICTION, SECRET
AVENGERS, CHRONICLES OF AN ILLUSTRIOUS HOUSE, &c. &c.

"The sooty African within his breast may bear
A heart replete with all a Christian's virtues."

VOL. III.

London:

Printed at the Minerva Press for

A. K. NEWMAN AND CO. LEADENHALL-STREET.

1817.



GONZALO DE BALDIVIA.

CHAPTER I.

—————Had I yielded to enlarge these limbs,
Or share the tyrant's favour, on the terms
Which he propos'd, I were a slave indeed:
No; in the deep and deadly damp of dungeons,
The soul can rear her sceptre, smile in anguish,
And triumph o'er oppression! *Gustavus Vasa.*

.....
Tools of oppression, ignorant and vain,
Why thus religion's sacred cause profane?
Why, senseless, to the negro's soul make known
That deity your murd'rous deeds disown?
Why thunder mercy in his frightened ear,
While the sharp lash extorts the burning tear?
Oppression, a Poem.

TO an English mind there is not an idea more shocking, more revolting, than the inhuman traffic for slaves; and not unfrequently the youthful ear of Avon-

dale was drawn from the melancholy indulgence of his own particular griefs to contemplate the miseries, hardships, and severities endured by the slaves retained in families of the first distinction at Potosi, where he visited.

At the house of a Portuguese Jew, by whom he got his bills on England negotiated, he saw a young African girl, whose loveliness and modesty particularly engaged his observance and his compassion, for many times he had seen her gentleness and patience put to very severe trial, by the imperious and capricious airs of her mistress, a middle-aged woman, whose own person was so utterly undesirable, so destitute of charms, that she fancied every female, on whom her husband cast an accidental glance, a rival.

The eyes of her unfortunate slave were always full of tears, and the commiserating Avondale read, in her dejected look, even more sorrow than the remembrance of the happiness she had been torn from, her parents, and her native land, could create : to him it expressed not the regret

of past enjoyments, but the agony of present suffering; and in this belief he was shortly confirmed by the discordant tones of the Jew's wife sounding loud and harshly on his ear, one morning, at an early hour, when business led him to inquire for her husband.

"Husband, indeed!" repeated the enraged wife; "such a husband as I have would move a saint to complain."

"And you," retorted the Jew, "are no saint."

"You thought me a saint before you married me," replied she.

"I was miserably deceived," said Mendez.

Unheeding his remark, she continued—"You called me an angel and a beauty, and all that was enchanting, before I degraded myself to become your wife."

The earl of Avondale looked at the enraged speaker, and wondered how many years had elapsed since their marriage, as not a trace of beauty remained on her bloated face, which was thickly embel-

lished with glowing carbuncles, now assuming a more vivid red from spite and fury.

“When I bestowed my person and my large possessions on my father’s clerk,” resumed she, “I certainly expected to be treated with decent respect, at least, and not to have been insulted by seeing my slaves preferred to me, even under my very nose.”

The abashed husband endeavoured to silence the clamour, which he saw disgusted the earl, and was opening the door of another apartment; but pushing him aside, she declared he should hear all she had to say—a false, barbarous wretch as he was. The natural ill-temper of the lady was that morning considerably increased by the jealous supposition that she had detected the unhappy Mendez in the act of soliciting the black girl, who had, on his former visits to the house, attracted the notice of the earl, and in a louder key she asked the trembling delinquent—“Did not I, this blessed morning, find you alone with that black serpent,” pointing to the poor

girl, who stood terrified and weeping in a corner of the room; "and did not I hear you tell her you would provide for her future comfort; and how, pray, was this to be effected, without entirely destroying mine, you vile man? But you have neither love nor pity for me, who have been the making of you, ungrateful and faithless wretch that you are. You are trying all you can to break my heart, which is too tender to bear your monstrous ill-usage; but I will be revenged," continued she, raising her voice to a scream; "I will flay off the skin of this black devil, who has presumed to think of supplanting me, your lawful wife; I will cut the flesh off her bones, piece by piece, to feed my dogs."

The earl of Avondale shuddered; he knew such savage barbarity was frequently practised, and he believed, as he looked on the distorted fury before him, that she was capable of putting her horrible menace in execution. Seeing his wife seat herself, breathless and panting, Mendez ventured to assert his innocence, protest-

ing he had never solicited the girl, or thought of her in the way he was accused; but knowing his wife's particular dislike to the poor creature, and seeing her always in tears, he had merely stopped to tell her that she should not be sold, as his wife had threatened, to don Felix de Lira, but that he would provide some situation of comfort for her.

“ I understand your charitable intentions,” returned his wife; “ but mind me, Gomez Mendez, I will have my own way, and dispose of this black slut as I please; don Felix has offered a handsome price for her, and he shall have her.”

The poor girl held up her hands in supplication.

Mendez, assuming resolution, replied—
“ Don Felix is an old debauchee, and has a houseful of women, of all colours, whom, like the grand Turk, he keeps for his pleasure; but as the wench seems to tremble at his name, she shall not be sold to him.”

“ But I say she shall be sold to him,” replied his wife, “ and you shall see who will be obeyed; she is of no sort of service

to me, always sighing and moping about, neither dead nor alive ; and if don Felix will give my price, he shall have her ; a wife must be a fine fool truly, who keeps slaves for the amusement of her husband. The black serpent shall be disposed of to somebody, I am resolved, and that immediately, and as well to don Felix de Lira as any other.”

Though the innocent object of this unfeminine rage did not understand all the jealous suspicions of her mistress, yet the very name of don Felix seemed to fill her with terror ; she merely comprehended that the libidinous old wretch had taken a fancy to, and had offered to purchase her. In an agony of tears she fell trembling at the feet of her inexorable mistress, and in very affecting terms, though delivered in broken Spanish, she supplicated not to be sold to the brutal don Felix, declaring herself willing to perform the most laborious drudgery rather than become the victim of lust.

“ Drudgery !” repeated the wife of Mendez, “ why, what labour are you fit for,

pray? you was bought to work in the cotton plantation, but there you pretended to fall sick, and my artful husband worked upon my tender disposition to take you into the house, to attend upon my person; and finely I have been rewarded for my compassion! But my eyes are open at last to my shameful injuries, and Mendez shall sell you, or I will make the house too hot to hold him; and as to you," spurning the still-kneeling creature with her foot, till the blood gushed from her nose and mouth, "I will trample you to death."

The earl of Avondale, who had stood a silent spectator of this scene, disgraceful to human nature, snatched the shrieking girl from the earth; he repressed the fury of the fiend, who would have continued her savage violence, and soothed, in accents of tenderest pity, the suffering girl. He then inquired of Mendez whether he would sell the unfortunate cause of dispute, whom, with much tenderness, he continued to support.

Mendez feared to reply; but his wife instantly answered in the affirmative, and

at once named the sum she expected to receive for her. The earl again asked the Jew whether he consented to the disposal of his property?

“His property!” repeated his wife contemptuously, “his property! I wonder in what corner of the earth he has any property! He cannot lay just claim to a stick, a rag, or a dollar in the world; he has no property; it is all mine; poor, deluded, weak fool that I was! I gave him a fine property; every thing he has in the world he owes to me; and yet, though I have been the making of him, and refused a grandee for his sake, he has no sort of gratitude, but must prefer a black wench to me, even under my very nose. I have noticed his kind, gentle behaviour to this serpent, ever since I have had her; but if he does not consent to sell her, let him look to the consequences.”

Mendez knew that his wife was a virago before he married her; but she was immensely rich, and he thought the wealth she possessed would enable him to bear

her ill-temper. With philosophic calmness he listened to her not-altogether-unfounded reproaches, patiently waiting till death should release him from a companion so every way disagreeable; nor was his wish for freedom likely to remain many years ungratified; his wife was much older than himself, of a corpulent make, had ungovernable passions, and indulging freely in the juice of the grape, gave encouragement to the hope, that she would shortly leave him to the enjoyment of the wealth he had so dearly purchased. Mendez, though a Jew, had virtues that a Christian might be proud of; he was charitable and humane, and frequently drew on himself his wife's rage, by endeavouring to avert it from her domestics: happy to release the suffering girl from further tyranny and persecution on his account, he at once consented to her disposal.

The earl of Avondale paid the money stipulated for by the wife of Mendez, and the wretched black girl was conducted to his palace. The earl of Avondale had no slaves, nor had he a single person of co-

hour in his establishment when he bought the slave of Mendez; it was from an impulse of humanity to deliver her from cruelty and oppression, nor did he, at the time, consider how he should dispose of her. Being informed of her arrival, he ordered her to be shewn into the saloon, where, fatigued with his morning's walk, he reclined on a sofa.

The servants being withdrawn, the earl perceiving she remained close by the door, bade her approach; but sinking on her knees, and clasping her hands, in artless language, she told him she was pleased with his gentle manners, and the soft tones of his voice; that she even liked his face much better than any white man's she had yet seen, and that she would faithfully serve him while she lived. Perceiving her pause, the earl again bade her rise; her countenance was interesting, her slim figure was finely formed; and as he contemplated her artless youth, he considered her remaining in his family, where no female presided, would be injurious to her morals, and at once he resolved to place

her under the protection of the marchioness de Baldivia.

The black girl still remained in the attitude of supplication; and as the big tears rolled down her face, she said—"Good white man, I am content to be your slave."

"You are no longer a slave," replied the earl; "I bought you from Mendez only to restore you to freedom."

"Freedom?" echoed she, with a wild expression of joy; "am I indeed free? and will you, generous white man—will you send me back, over sea, to my native land?"

The earl sighed, and confessed, that though he would gladly restore her to happiness, that was a request beyond his power.

"Well, it is no matter," resumed she sorrowfully, "for what is Africa to me now, who have lost all that made its groves delightful?" She pressed a bracelet of amber and coral, that bound her wrist, to her lips, and bursting into tears, continued—"What have I to wish for in my native country! the barbarous white man has spread ruin and desolation there; the be-

loved of my heart is dead, or, like me, a wretched slave."

"Be comforted," said the earl; "I cannot restore the dead, nor know I, unfortunate girl, from what part of Africa you have been brought; but the little good that remains in my power I shall not be backward in performing; you are no longer a slave—you are at liberty."

"Am I indeed at liberty?" said she fearfully; "and will you not compel me to become like those miserable women whom the wife of Mendez said were retained by the horrid don Felix de Lira? for though we are separated for ever, I love a youth of my own nation. White man, he was worthy to be loved, for he was kind, and brave, and gentle. I was to have been his bride, but the destroyers came; they tore me shrieking from the bower his hands had formed; they laughed at my tears; they mocked at my agonies. I saw my parents and my brothers murdered at my feet, for they strove to rescue me from the brutal Spaniards; and, more to aggravate the misery of my condition,

I saw the beloved of my soul in the power of the inhuman enemy. I was made a slave, but the Great Spirit has preserved my innocence; and, I beseech you, confine me again in that dark, loathsome dungeon in which I was borne from the pleasant shores of Africa—hang on my limbs again those heavy chains that bent me with their galling weight—condemn me to famine, to the torturing whip; but do not force me to be unfaithful to him whom I alone can love!”

The eyes of Avondale rained pitying tears. In this little affecting history, though delivered in very imperfect Spanish, he discovered an elevation of mind, and purity of principle, that made him doubly anxious to place the poor afflicted one under the protection of the marchioness de Baldivia, where he was certain her virtues would be cherished, her understanding improved; where she would be carefully informed in the duties of society, and, what was of infinitely higher importance, she would be instructed in the great truths of religion.

“Be not apprehensive,” replied the earl, “nor believe that all white men are murderers and ruffians. Confide in my assurances that I respect your misfortunes and your virtue too much, either to increase the one or injure the other. I would to Heaven I could restore to you the happiness you lament ; but as this is not in my power, I will remove you from the possibility of danger and further suffering—I will place you with one of the most gentle and virtuous of her sex; and I trust, in the kindness of the marchioness de Baldivia, you will find consolation for past sorrows, and in time cease to regret your native country.”

Forgetful of his vows and promises, the dissolute marquis de Baldivia, as he recovered health, plunged into his former excesses, in defiance of the counsels of the good Velusco, who ceased not to represent the consequences of his vices here and hereafter. The society of his lovely wife and her friends had again become insipid ; his days were dull and tedious, and his nights full of terror ; his dreams were

haunted by the pale phantoms of those his murderous hand had precipitated to the grave; and, fearful of betraying his guilty secrets to the marchioness, he no longer slept in her apartment, and never retired to his couch without endeavouring to drown the reflections that made "*night horrible*."

The thoughtless gaiety of donna Violante had afforded him relief from the pensive gentleness of his wife, whose undeviating propriety wearied him, and he began to think that the lively sallies of the giddy girl were invitations to a more particular intimacy.

Donna Violante at first seemed inclined to encourage his attentions; but, though a coquette, her mind was strictly virtuous; and soon discovering the profligate designs of the marquis, she kept so close to the side of Rosaviva, and treated him with such chilling reserve, that he grew tired of a pursuit to which he perceived he had been allured only by the vain desire of admiration on the part of the lady, and

which promised to himself no kind of advantage.

At this period, too, a beautiful peasant had caught his eye, and appeared a conquest of more consequence than the lively Violante, in whom self-love was the predominant passion, and whose most serious intention was to be followed and admired.

In a morning ride, attended only by Lazarillo, the marquis de Baldivia, to avoid the scorching heat of the sun, pursued his way down a green lane, shaded on each side by limes and citrons, whose beautiful blossoms perfumed the air with their delicious fragrance. The marquis was buried in thought, and proceeded farther on a road with which he was entirely unacquainted, than he at first intended. At its extremity he beheld a romantic cabin, peeping from between clumps of roses, jessamines, and myrtles, at the back of which rose a luxuriant plantation of mulberry, almond, and orange trees. The marquis stopped to admire the situation of the cabin, sheltered by a steep hill, on

whose fertile summit the convent of St. Ignatius reared its antique spires.

Lazarillo, pointing to the cabin, said it belonged to Juan the gardener. The marquis was warm and thirsty; he bade Lazarillo inquire of the inmates of the cabin for some fruit.

Lazarillo threw himself from his horse, and passing through the wicket that separated the cabin from the lane, saw, seated near an open lattice, an elderly woman, spinning cotton, to whom he repeated the request of the marquis.

“Juan, my nephew,” said the old woman, “is in the plantation, gathering fruit, which he every day takes to Potosi to sell. I am lame, and cannot attend upon you myself; but if you will take the trouble to go round the cabin, you will find a white gate that leads to the plantation, where Juan will be happy to supply you. Or you may go a shorter way,” pointing to a door that opened on a garden full of the choicest flowers, beyond which were seen trees bending beneath the weight of luscious ripe fruit,

Lazarillo, knowing the impatient temper of Baldivia, considered it wisest to report to him what the old woman had said; which having done, he asked if his lordship would alight and repose himself in the cabin, while he repaired to the plantation for the fruit?

The marquis, fretful at seeing Lazarillo return empty-handed, peevishly replied—"No, I detest old women;" and bidding Lazarillo follow, he pursued his way beyond the cabin, and soon arrived at the white gate, which was thrown open, and presented a scene of vegetable beauty, charming to the eye, and grateful to the smell, for on every side opening blossoms mingled their sweets with the rich glow of the ripe fruit.

Commanding Lazarillo to secure the horses, the marquis entered the plantation, the neatness and order of which he surveyed with pleased admiration. Every tree appeared in a state of high cultivation, and the walks between them were smooth and ornamented with rustic seats. About the middle of the plantation the trees

opened on a square of short smooth turf, and here the marquis beheld a sturdy, well-looking peasant, harnessing a mule to a light carriage, on which were placed baskets of fruit, prepared for the market at Potosi, and near him stood a young female, tying up bundles of beautiful flowers. She was habited in a short white petticoat, which at every turn displayed a delicate little foot and slender ankle. A dark green jacket, open at the neck, discovered the natural whiteness of her skin; her bright auburn tresses were twisted fantastically round her head, and over her left temple nodded a bunch of *Caffraria jessamine*. The sun had impressed her face with a tint of brown that took nothing from its beauty; her dark hazel eyes beamed joy and pleasure, and the dimples that played round her rosy mouth spoke the happiness that dwelt in her bosom.

The cabin of Juan the gardener was well known to many of the inhabitants of Potosi, and the frequent visits made by them to the plantation had accustomed Aminta to the conversation of persons far

superior to her in rank, and divested her of the awkward bashfulness generally met with in her situation. The flatteries of the young men of Potosi had also inspired her with vanity. She had been repeatedly told she was handsome, and the small mirror that hung in her chamber did not contradict the assertion.

Before this reflector of her beauties, Aminta spent all the time she could possibly snatch from her employments in the cabin and the garden, in braiding her glossy hair, and fitting to her slender waist the jacket that was to display its beautiful round, and the graceful fall of her polished shoulder.

Passing the bowing Juan, without bestowing on him the smallest notice, the marquis addressed himself to the blushing Aminta, whose eyes fell beneath his ardent gaze.

Pointing to a seat under a spreading tree, whose thick branches afforded a shelter from the sun, she hastened to gather the mulberries he requested in a neat osier basket, which she previously lined with fragrant leaves.

The restless eyes of Baldivia followed the light steps of Aminta, and watched every agile motion. He thought her beautiful, and determined, if art or wealth could prevail, to gain possession of her person.

Lazarillo, as he ate his fruit, entered into conversation with Juan, who cast such uneasy glances towards the marquis and Aminta, while he placed and replaced the baskets of fruit and flowers, as convinced the sagacious Lazarillo that he was the lover of the fair peasant, and felt not a few jealous pangs at seeing her listening, and with smiles, to a stranger.

After lingering as long as it was possible, Juan advanced towards the spot where Aminta stood, attending the marquis; he called her by her name. Aminta was not pleased at this interruption, but she obeyed his call.

Juan, in a whisper, bade her not pay so much attention, nor listen to the flatteries of a stranger. She blushed, frowned, and affected to laugh at his jealousy, while honest Juan, not being able to form

a pretence for further delay, led his mule unwillingly through the gate, fretting at the giddy levity of his cousin.

Lazarillo, perceiving the marquis in no hurry to depart, stretched himself under a citron tree, and fell asleep.

Baldivia looked round, and finding himself free from observation, artfully inquired of Aminta if the young man who had just departed with the fruit was her brother?

Aminta answered—"No, he is my cousin, the son of my uncle; his parents are dead; and my mother being a widow, he has persuaded her to reside in his cabin, and between us we manage the garden and the plantation."

"And between you and this Juan," said the marquis, "I suspect there is more love than cousins usually feel for each other. Yes, I see my conjecture is right; that rosy blush is a confirmation of my surmise."

"I confess," returned Aminta, "Juan tells me he loves me dearly and truly; and—and——" hesitating.

"You return his passion," said Baldivia,

in a tone of disappointment, "and you will marry him?"

"He has offered me marriage certainly," resumed Aminta. "My mother too pleads in his favour; she tells me I am young and thoughtless, and blind to my own interest and comfort, or I should at once comply with Juan's proposal and her wishes, which are anxiously set on seeing me settled in life before she dies; for when she is called away, I have not a friend in the world, and it will not be decent or proper for me to live here alone with a young man, though he is so near a relation."

"And do you seriously love this cousin?" asked the marquis.

"I am only eighteen, and hardly know what love means," replied Aminta. "We were very poor; my mother too is lame and sickly, and Juan has been so very good and kind, that there is no denying but he deserves my favour; but then he is so grave, and I am so lively, that we are for ever disagreeing. He thinks me giddy,

and I think him cross; but for all this I suppose I shall be obliged to marry him."

"Obliged!" repeated the marquis; "and who has power to oblige you to sacrifice so much bloom and beauty to a churlish clown, who now, while a lover, presumes to find fault with your charming gaiety, and who, doubtless, when your husband, will be jealous of every smile you shall chance to bestow on another?"

"That is the very thing I fear," returned Aminta, "for, to own the truth, the temper of Juan is very much disposed to jealousy. Yet though I have no great prospect of content before me, I shall be obliged to take him; for, should my mother die, which is likely enough to happen, my situation, as she says, would be very friendless."

"I think otherwise," said Baldivia, pressing her hand; "your exquisite beauty would ensure you friends, who would esteem themselves happy in the permission to remove you from this obscurity to a splendid situation, where ad-

miration would attend your steps, and wealth and pleasure contend to form your happiness."

The heart of Aminta fluttered. She had once taken fruit to the wife of a grandee, and her memory tenaciously preserved the remembrance of the magnificent apartment, and the sparkling jewels that adorned the dress of the lady. While the marquis spoke, the enchanting scene was renewed in her recollection, and her vanity told her that she would have looked ten times handsomer had she been so richly adorned.

Recollecting the marquis still held her hand, she would have withdrawn it; but, throwing into his dangerous eyes all the fire of love, he pressed her hand to his lips, and sighing heavily, said—"Farewell, lovely girl! I must depart, but your image will go with me, while you, regardless of the pangs your beauty has occasioned, will forget we have ever seen each other."

Aminta replied—"No, it will be impossible to forget."

"You will remember me without re-

gret," said Baldivia, "without the wish that we should meet again."

"And wherefore should I wish?" asked Aminta; "you a great lord, and I a peasant girl, it will be better I should not wish to see you again."

"I see," said Baldivia, "Juan possesses your heart. Happy Juan! Farewell, Aminta! For my own peace it will be best we meet no more. I should grow mad and desperate were I to behold you the wife of Juan."

"I have not yet determined to marry Juan," returned she; "it is an event that may never happen."

"That little sentence," resumed the marquis, "includes hope, and gives me new life. Does Juan carry fruit every day to Potosi?"

"He does," replied Aminta, "and nearly at the same hour."

"A thousand thanks," said Baldivia, "for this kind intimation. We shall meet again, sweet Aminta, and you, perhaps, may be prevailed on to listen to the vows

of a lover of higher pretensions than this peasant Juan."

He then placed a piece of gold in her hand.

"I have no change," said Aminta, "nor do I think my mother can assist me. Let me see, you want——"

"Not the change of that gold," interrupted the marquis; "my only want is your heart. Keep the gold—it is yours."

"No," replied Aminta, "it cannot be mine, for the fruit is Juan's. The saints forbid that I should wrong him!"

"Pay him the value of the fruit myself and attendant have eaten," said Baldivia, "and with the remainder buy some little ornament, which, while you wear it, may remind you of him who will count the moments till he again beholds you."

Aminta wished that he might return on the morrow; but, endeavouring to release her hand, which he yet held a prisoner, she replied—"My mother, who has had some experience in life, warns me not to listen, or at all believe, the flatteries of those in a station above me; for that great

lords only talk of love to poor girls like me to bring them to disgrace and ruin, and such perhaps may be your intention."

The marquis merely replied—"Your mother is old, and grows severe; being past admiration herself, she would enviously debar you from the enjoyments to which your youth naturally inclines, and your beauty would certainly ensure you. Farewell, lovely Aminta! remember, if you follow the prudent counsels of your mother, and become the wife of Juan, you will dash from you the proud fortune that courts your acceptance."

As he spoke, he again pressed his lips on her hand, and, with an artful sigh of feigned regret, left her.

Aminta echoed his sigh with one of far greater sincerity; her straining eyes followed the handsome stranger till she could no longer discern the snowy plume that gracefully waved in his hat. "He is gone!" said she; "I behold him no longer." She then threw herself on the seat he had quitted, and recalled to her memory the rich sparkle of his dark eyes, his bewitch-

ing smile, the melting tones of his voice, the dignity of his mien, the splendour of his habit; and as these swam in her heated imagination, the humble state in which Providence had placed her became hateful.

“ Oh, why,” said she, gazing round her with a dissatisfied air, “ why was not I born the daughter of a grandee, rich and powerful? I then should have been arrayed in costly velvets; I then should have shone in gold and diamonds; I might then have been the bride of this too-handsome stranger. As it is, I must be miserable; for, unhappy creature that I am! I, alas! was born a peasant, and am doomed to be the wife of a vulgar clown, whose person, dress, and conversation are all odious, disgusting, and hateful.”

The marquis de Baldivia had left behind him one of his gloves. Aminta caught it up in ecstasy. In her sight it appeared a treasure, for it belonged to him whose wily flatteries had been so gratifying to her vanity. The glove was highly perfumed, and the silly girl, as she covered it with kisses, thought its scent more grate-

ful than the odours which were exhaled from the fruits and flowers by which on every side she was surrounded.

“It is perfumed by the breath of the stranger,” said Aminta, concealing the glove in her bosom, yet unconscious of the poison it had already imbibed from the artful Baldivia; “while I wear it about me,” continued she, “I shall believe him still near me—I shall faithfully recall his every word and look, while he, surrounded by his grand and gay companions, thinks not of the peasant girl of Valambrosia.”

But here she was mistaken; the profligate marquis thought of her alone, and the means by which he might gain secure possession of her person. His fancy dwelt on the luxuriant beauties diffused over her form, and the preventing Juan from their enjoyment, by separating them for ever.

Baldivia knew his own powers of pleasing. He was conscious, when he chose to fascinate, he was not likely to be seen without exciting interest in a female bosom, or to absent himself without being

wished for and regretted. Though burning with impatience to seduce Aminta from her peaceful home, and accomplish her destruction, he constrained his impetuous feelings, and for several days went not near Valambrosia.

Too well acquainted with the weakness of the female mind, he artfully controlled his own wishes to give greater strength to Aminta's, who had, indeed, for five days anxiously expected his return, during which time Juan had been exposed to scorn, and treated with more than usual disdain. On the seventh morning, Aminta began to consider the folly of expecting to see the stranger, and to believe her mother's observations on the vows and promises of great men were not void of truth. She had declared they would sigh, flatter, and swear they loved, to gain their own wicked purposes; but as soon as their backs were turned on the believing female, they thought of her no more; or if they ever did remember her, it was only to despise her vanity, and laugh at her credulity.

“Such,” said Aminta, with a sigh of

regret, "such has been the conduct of the deceitful stranger. Like the grandees my mother tells of, he flattered me into a belief that my charms had made an impression on his heart; and having laughed at my folly, he has forgotten me. Yet I am happy that my wild expectations are confined to my own bosom, and that I have not put it in the power of my mother to reprove, or Juan to despise my credulity. Oh, poor Juan! since this handsome stranger pretended to speak of love, thy affection has been disdained; but I will try to forget this deceiver, and to be just to thy worth."

But this was a task too arduous for the weak-minded Aminta, in whose eyes he appeared more boorish than ever. The tones of his manly voice were discordant to her ear, and she shrunk in disgust from the honest pressure of his hand, hardened by virtuous industry.

Yet the mind and manners of Juan were much superior to the neighbouring peasantry, for a near relation of his, a monk belonging to the monastery on the hill,

had given him instructions that, united to a good, plain understanding, raised him above the level of his fellow-clowns.

Juan loved his cousin Aminta with a rational affection, which made him aware of her faults. He was sensible that she was excessively vain of her person; and as he knew she overrated her own attractions, he dreaded not only that his own powers of pleasing would be insufficient to engage and satisfy her volatile and capricious fancy, but that some more artful and wealthy competitor would delude and dazzle her senses, and having seduced her into ruin, would eventually break her aged mother's heart and his own.

Such were the thoughts of the reflecting Juan, while Aminta, having secretly wept the absence of the stranger, began to feel her own consequence wounded by his want of taste and sincerity.

“If he had indeed thought me beautiful,” said she, “and loved me as he professed, he would not have remained five long days without seeing me. My mother is quite right; truth is not to be

found among grandees, and it will be prudent in me to pay a little more attention to the courtship of my cousin Juan. Yonder he goes; to be sure, his figure is not so much amiss, for he is tall and straight, only he wears his hat slouching over his brows, which are tolerably well formed, and his long-shaped grey eyes, and his ruddy cheeks, and his white teeth, are all very passable to be sure, and I cannot deny but I have seen many much worse-looking young men than Juan. There is Ambrose the tailor, under the hill—he, poor fellow, has bandy legs; and Mathias the vintner has blear eyes; and Basil the barber has a crooked nose. Compared with these, Juan is a proper fellow; but then the handsome stranger. Alas! alas! I must not think of him, or my cousin Juan will become in my eyes as disagreeable as his companions.”

Aminta left her pallet on the Sunday morning with a determination of banishing every remembrance of the deceitful stranger from her thoughts, and of treating Juan with more kindness. “He does

not tell me I am beautiful," said she, "but he thinks me so, or he would not love me. Juan is sincere, and I will listen to his advice; I will obey my mother, and try to love him."

In the morning Juan went to mass alone, but Aminta was his companion to vespers. The narrow path that wound down the hill was steep, and Aminta would twice have fallen but for the strong arm of Juan, who took occasion to observe that in the journey the roads were steep and dangerous, and a weak female needed the support of an able friend to prevent her stumbling. The way was long, and there being no person to draw off the attention of Aminta as they sauntered homeward, he protested he loved her in spite of her scornful ways.

"You have no reason to complain to-day, I am sure, Juan," replied she, with a smile that provoked him to snatch a kiss.

"No," said he; "be but thus good-tempered always, and we shall be happy as the day is long, for we are both young and healthy, and the plantation flourishes be-

yond my hope. What then prevents our marrying? Your mother is agreeable, and for my part I have no other wish in the world."

Aminta sighed, blushed, and thought of the stranger; but having nothing to expect from that quarter, she promised to be his as soon as her mother had finished spinning, and got the cotton wove that was to make some necessary articles of apparel.

Juan said he would mention their design to marry to his uncle, the monk, who, he was certain, would approve the match, as he had often told him he wanted a wife.

To this Aminta made no objection, and satisfied and delighted with her cheerful acquiescence, Juan pressed on her beautiful pouting lip the kiss of pure and honest affection. He entirely forgot the caprice of her behaviour during the last week, and leading her by the hand, entered his neat cabin, the happiest of mortals. Aminta's mother partook his joy, and their young companions, who assembled on Sunday evenings to regale on

Juan's fruit, were made acquainted with the engagement they had entered into.

Juan retired to rest that night with a heart at ease, and soon sunk into dreams of future felicity. Not so Aminta; restless and dissatisfied, she repented having given a promise which her heart did not incline her to fulfil. She drew the glove of the marquis from her bosom, and tears of vexation and disappointment burst from her eyes.

"There is a spell in this glove," said she; "for since it has lain next my heart, I have not been a single moment free from painful thoughts and uneasy flutterings. Hence," continued she, throwing it from her, "hence, thou mischievous inflamer of my bosom, and bear with thee all remembrance of thy deceitful owner! My dreams of grandeur are at an end; I shall shortly be the wife of Juan the gardener, and I will try to be content in my humble condition."

Such were the resolves of Aminta, who, in pursuance of her intention, arose the next morning even earlier than usual, and

having set the cabin in order, busied herself in her garden, tying up her nosegays, and placing them in the baskets ready for market. She then repaired to the plantation. Juan was surprised to see her out so early; he was also greatly pleased, for the poor youth believed it was to enjoy an uninterrupted hour with him before he set off to Potosi.

Their morning repast was delightful; the old woman seemed to forget her infirmities; Juan was unusually merry; and Aminta began to believe that happiness arose from doing what was right.

Juan having set off with his fruit, Aminta left her mother engaged in listening to the reports of Basil the barber, who constantly retailed all the news he picked up in his daily attendance on his customers at Potosi. Aminta took her reel to the large citron tree in the plantation, under which the marquis had sat. She began to wind the cotton that was to be wove for her wedding garments. The thought was far from exciting pleasurable emotions, though she knew the texture

would be finer than any she had yet worn. In spite of her endeavours, she could neither banish the handsome stranger from her mind, nor persuade her rebellious heart to love her cousin Juan. To divert her thoughts from dwelling on a person interdicted by prudence, she began singing; but her voice was no longer gay, and her lips involuntarily uttered what was passing in her bosom.

“ A handsome lord sigh’d at a peasant girl’s feet,
Then left her in sadness his absence to mourn;
Ah ! why, silly maid, let the summer’s day fleet
In sighing for him who will never return ?

“ He vow’d and he flatter’d—’twas only in jest;
The peasant girl’s folly awaken’d his scorn ;
Then banish his image at once from thy breast,
Nor sigh for an ingrate who ne’er will return !”

“ He is here—he is returned,” said the marquis de Baldivia, who, concealed by the spreading tree under which she sat, had listened to the song so expressive of her feelings, and now threw himself at her feet ; “ he is not an ingrate. No, Aminta, you have not been for a single instant forgotten. In this absence, equally tedious

and painful to me, I have been preparing for your future happiness, if you will consent to bless my passion, and quit this obscurity, where your charms can only be seen by vulgar clowns."

Aminta had been silent from surprise, but, recovering recollection, she bade the marquis rise, lest Basil should surprise him kneeling before her.

"And who is Basil?" asked Baldivia, impatiently; "another lover?"

Aminta smiled and explained. Never had her heart experienced a moment of such exquisite delight; but she remembered her engagement to Juan, and it was a short-lived transport.

The artful Baldivia read in her countenance what was passing in her mind, and by tender complaints of her coldness and his sufferings, he won from her the confession he expected, that she had been much disappointed by his not returning, as he had led her to believe he would; and a long week having elapsed, it was natural for her to suppose his professions jests, and herself forgotten; and under this mortify-

ing impression she had yielded to the advice of her mother, and consented to be the wife of her cousin Juan, whose love for her she had no reason to doubt, as it had been evinced in a thousand acts of kindness.

The wily marquis acted the part of distraction; he implored her compassion; he affected to weep, and threatened to destroy, first Juan, and then himself.

Aminta, really terrified at the wildness of his looks, and his menaces, wept also, and weakly owned that her heart had not gone with the promise her lips had been persuaded to pronounce; that she did not, nor ever could, love Juan, though she had consented to be his wife.

Baldivia now artfully inflamed her ambition, by representing the injustice she did to her own beauty and merit, in awarding her consent to marry a peasant, and condemning herself to perpetual drudgery, when wealth and grandeur courted her acceptance. "Besides," continued he, "having yourself ensured fortune, you will be able to provide for the increasing

infirmities of your mother, whose age calls for ease and indulgence.”

“ And Juan,” said Aminta, “ what will become of him ?”

“ Juan,” replied the marquis, “ will select another partner, more suited to his own condition. There is no doubt but he will be happy.”

Aminta, though delighted with the arrangements of the marquis, was not yet satisfied of the propriety and justice of breaking the promise she had so solemnly pledged to her cousin. She blushed and hesitated, and at length asked him if he would take the trouble to explain his intentions respecting her to her mother ?

This was a requisition totally unexpected by Baldivia, and for a moment embarrassed him ; but with his usual cunning he lamented the utter impossibility of acceding to her request, and in excuse he affirmed that the utmost secrecy must be observed in the business, he having connexions who would vehemently oppose his wishes, and exert their utmost power to effect their eternal separation, should

they come to a knowledge of the ardent passion he had conceived for her. "Having thus candidly explained my situation," continued he, "you perceive, my charming Aminta, how extremely imprudent you would act in making a confidant of your mother, who, if she approved our attachment, would not in her joy be able to conceal the future splendid prospects of her daughter; but partial to the son of her brother, this peasant Juan, it is most probable she would reject any proposal to set aside a marriage she has taken so much pains to bring about."

"Yes," said Aminta, sighing, "yes, my mother loves Juan as well as she does me; she would urge the gratitude we owe him, she would renew the story of his sheltering us from poverty when my father died; I see, were I to speak of your love and your grand offers, my mother would insist that I should see you no more."

"And would you, dearest Aminta," resumed the marquis, passionately pressing her hand, "would you observe so cruel an injunction?"

|

“ Alas !” said she, sorrowfully, “ how could I resist it ? I should be closely watched by Juan ; nay, perhaps confined.”

“ Do not distract me with the idea,” exclaimed Baldivia ; “ I should become desperate, and Juan, the detested Juan, would be the first sacrifice to my jealous rage. But, cruel Aminta, it is in your power to avert the ruin that threatens to involve our happiness.”

“ I cannot perceive by what means,” said she, despondingly.

“ Ah !” said Baldivia, “ spite of your denials, I can see you love this peasant, this low-born clown, this boorish Juan.”

“ No,” replied Aminta, “ you are deceived ; I call the saints to witness I do not love him.”

“ Yet,” rejoined the marquis, “ you resolve to marry him.”

“ Alas !” answered Aminta, “ my mother will have it so ; I too have promised. There remains no way to avoid the marriage.”

“ Yes,” said Baldivia, “ there is a way.”

Perceiving him pause, she eagerly requested he would name the way.

“By flying with me who adore you,” replied the marquis; “by bestowing your charms on a man who will place you in the elevated sphere you were formed to adorn.”

The heart of the erring Aminta beat tumultuously. State, splendour, equipage, swam in her disordered fancy, and the marquis soon won from her a promise to steal from the cabin at the hour of midnight, and join him at the wicket, where he would be ready to convey her far from laborious occupations, and the equally-degrading offers of the peasant Juan.

The repeater of the marquis warned him of the hour, and wishing to avoid meeting Juan, he appointed a signal, and having again received the promise of Aminta to be in readiness, he departed, exulting in the success obtained with so little trouble.

While the weak and credulous Aminta was yielding to the seduction of the marquis de Baldivia, her unsuspecting mother was busily preparing the cotton which

was to furnish articles of usefulness and comfort for the young couple whose union she anticipated with content of heart. From his infancy she had been acquainted with the character of Juan ; she knew he was religious, honest, industrious, and good-tempered ; he was, besides, young, healthy, and good-looking, and in becoming his wife she thought it impossible for her daughter to be other than happy ; and, for herself, having seen Aminta so comfortably settled in life, her mind would be at ease, and death, whenever it approached, would be met with resignation and tranquillity.

Juan, on his return from Potosi, was lively and full of spirits. He said he had seen his uncle, who, being to set off on a mission on Wednesday, he had requested to bestow on them the nuptial benediction on the following day.

Aminta frowned, and said he was too precipitate.—“ We can by no means marry to-morrow,” said she ; “ our new clothes will not be ready.”

“ We shall be full as happy in our old ones,” replied Juan ; “ and no dress, Amin-

ta, can make you prettier in my eyes than you appear at this moment."

He would have kissed the glowing cheek that seemed to invite his lip, but, repulsing him with disdain, she told him it would be quite time enough to indulge in such liberties when he had a right to demand her compliance.

Juan was hurt at her scornful manner, and, as she retreated from his arms, looked after her with a countenance so rueful, that the old woman could not refrain from a hearty laugh.

"Aminta is right, Juan," said she; "a young girl should never kiss a man till he is her husband."

"But then," replied he, twirling his hat, "she might have suffered me to kiss her."

"Let the priest once join your hands," said the old woman, "and I warrant she will kiss thee oftener than will be agreeable to thy inclination."

The flushed cheek of Aminta, and the agitated forgetfulness of her manner, were too obvious to escape observation; but the happy Juan, and her equally-contented

mother, placed all her mistakes to the account of the ceremony that was to take place on the morrow, and the inequalities of her temper, on this consideration, were borne by them both without a murmur.

To the great relief of Aminta, at length the hour of rest arrived, and being certain her mother and Juan slept, she softly opened her narrow lattice; it faced the wicket; and though there was no moon, it was a clear and tranquil night, and the watchful Aminta could discern every object that moved in the obscurity. To her impatient mind the moments were long as hours, and a presage of approaching evil warned her to quit the lattice, and retire to her pallet; conscience too, upbraided her with ingratitude to the worthy Juan, and represented the agonies of her mother when her flight should be discovered—
“But I shall send for my mother,” said she, “and make her as grand and as happy as myself; and as to Juan, though he may be a little angry and sorry at first, he will be convinced that I was not a fit wife for

him, and he will make a more prudent choice."

Again she listened, and leaned from the lattice; but no sound, except of the night breeze, that shook the blossoms from the limes, met her ear; no form approached; and her eyes filled with the tears of mortified pride and disappointed ambition.

"Perhaps," said Aminta, "this great lord, whose name I do not know, has only been making a jest of me; doubtless he does not intend to come—the hour he appointed is past."

She thought of the silken robes and rich jewels she expected to shine in; and believing herself deceived and disappointed, for some time she wept bitterly—"My mother, however, and Juan," resumed she, "know nothing of my folly; and if I can but conceal my vexation, and keep my own secret, all may yet be well. I will never listen to the fine speeches of a grandee again; and after all, many would be glad to be in my place, to be so well married, and so comfortably settled, in a neat, pretty cabin; yes, yes, I know Theresa

and Fimenta would think themselves happy to catch Juan."

She rose with an intention to close the lattice, but at that moment her evil genius prevailed; the bell of the neighbouring monastery announced the midnight hour; while, with beating heart, she counted the deep, reverberating strokes, the white, waving plumes of the marquis de Baldivia caught her eye, and she heard the appointed signal; she leaned from the lattice, and he softly pronounced her name.

Again gay visions of splendour dazzled her senses and confounded her reason, and the regrets of Juan and the agonies of her mother were no more remembered. In a tumult of pleasure she unclosed the doors of the peaceful cabin, and left, in that tranquil seat of honest industry, the happiness she was never again to enjoy.

"Seek another bride, honest Juan," said Baldivia, as he clasped her in his extended arms; "this fair prize is mine!"

"My poor mother," sighed Aminta, as she cast a last look at the cabin, "who shall comfort you for my loss!"

“ Her nephew Juan, sweet Aminta,” replied her exulting seducer, as he hurried her along the green lane, near the top of which a carriage was waiting to convey her to Paluda, whose magnificent halls and verdant groves had too often witnessed his guilty pleasures, and echoed the repentant groans of his unhappy, deluded victims.

The innocent, deserted marchioness de Baldivia had been informed, by her libertine husband, that he had been sent for to Lima by the viceroy, on important affairs relative to the state of the country. Rosaviva affected to believe, but she was not without suspicion that he was again engaged in some licentious amour; her thoughts were, however, carefully concealed in her own bosom, and when her friends inquired after the health of the marquis, and the period of his absence, they were unconscious that they were adding to her affliction, and increasing her misery, by preferring questions she could only answer evasively.

The lovely marchioness now more deep-

ly than ever lamented the loss of her parents, for though she had a numerous female acquaintance, she felt that among them all she had not a friend to whom she could confide her sorrows, or to whose affection she could look for consolation under trials so afflictive. The religion of Rosaviva alone enabled her to bear up against the disappointment of her cherished hopes; on earth she had lost every prospect of happiness, but there was a world to come, and to obtain felicity there she was exemplary in her conduct, merciful and kind to all around her; and while smarting under affliction herself, she dried the tears of the unfortunate; and the aged, the sick, and the indigent, blessed her diffusive charity.

The earl of Avondale found in the marchioness de Baldivia an attentive auditor, while, in the energetic language of truth and feeling, he related the little affecting history of the poor black girl, whose freedom he had so humanely purchased.

In her benevolent cousin, Rosaviva acknowledged a mind congenial with her own, and readily acceded to his wish, that

she would receive and protect the unfortunate girl. The long absence of the marquis affording sufficient leisure, Rosaviva beguiled the uneasy feelings of her lacerated bosom, by instructing the simple, affectionate creature committed to her care, whose docility of temper and comprehensive mind rendered the occupation not undelightful to her, who was ever active in the service of religion and virtue.

In a short time the marchioness, believing her charge sufficiently informed, proposed to the earl of Avondale to bestow on her the holy rite of baptism, as she had expressed an abhorrence of the errors of Paganism, and evinced a fervent desire to be made a Christian.

Never did the lovely Rosaviva appear, in the enamoured eyes of the adoring Avondale, so angelic, as when answering for and supporting the innocent African at the sacred rite that admitted her to a participation of the promises which are a Christian's support through earthly troubles; and never did he with keener agony deplore the fate that had united such perfection to

a monster dead to the celestial charms of virtue.

Rosaviva bestowed on the African the name of Isabella, out of compliment to her husband, whose mother had borne that appellation. Never was a heart more grateful, more sincerely attached, than that which beat in the artless bosom of Isabella, in whose eyes the marchioness appeared above mortality ; she respected and loved her with an affection that made her attentive to every word and look. Constantly about her person, and ever on the watch to anticipate her commands, the state of Isabella was now far removed from hardship, severity, and want ; and could she have forgotten the youth to whom she had plighted the vow of love, she would have been quite happy, for the commands of her lovely mistress were easy, and delivered in a voice of gentle kindness, and her benefactor, the noble-minded earl of Avondale, constantly encouraged her perseverance in virtue by useful and liberal gifts.

Rosaviva, though far from the enjoyment of happiness, was resigned ; the hours

which had passed away heavily, were now beguiled of their sadness, for her mind was employed in teaching Isabella to read and write, who easily conquered every difficulty in these branches of learning. She was soon skilful with her needle, and having one morning, thinking herself unheard, warbled one of the wild airs of her own country, the marchioness finding she had a soft plaintive voice, began to instruct her in music. The soul of Isabella was tuned to harmony, and she was soon able to sing the simple ballads the gentle Rosaviva delighted to hear, and to accompany herself on the guitar.

These simple, innocent avocations were in some degree interrupted by the return of the marquis, who seemed now more eager after entertainment than ever, and for some weeks the palace was continually crowded with guests, while one entertainment followed another in rapid succession. It was now the marchioness perceived that Baldivia studiously avoided Velasco, and seldom retired to his couch, but with a frame fevered, and a brain bewildered and intoxi-

cated; the hope of his reformation entirely forsook her, yet still her affection remained undiminished; and while she wept his vices, she could not withdraw her affection—"Oh, my beloved parents!" exclaimed she, elevating her blue eyes to heaven, "you are happy, for you lived not to see the vices of Gonzalo, or the wretchedness of Rosaviva; were it not for the blessed hope of a reunion with you, what could support me under such dreadful calamity! what preserve me from despair! Oh, never again let woman be captivated by exterior! oh, never let her place her happiness in the keeping of a man with whose principles she is unacquainted! for, alas! the union which has not the conviction of virtue for its basis can only be productive of misery, which wealth cannot alleviate, to which human consolation can afford no comfort; splendour cannot still the throbbings of an agonized heart; oh no! the grave alone can bestow rest; death only end such poignant affliction!"

CHAPTER II.



The brain will madden
When disappointed pride sharpens the sting
And horror of remorse. Oh ! who can bear
To think the days of peace and happiness
Are fled for ever, nor leave one ling'ring
Gleam of hope behind to cheer the gloomy
Desolation made by vice !

WHEN the vain, weak-minded Aminta left her humble home, the pleasant, peaceful cabin of Valambrosia, and unfeelingly deserted, for an absolute stranger, her aged and infirm parent, and the honest, worthy youth to whom only the evening before she had solemnly promised her hand, it was not love that urged her to folly, but the proud persuasion that the marquis de Baldivia, captivated by her irresistible beauty, would immediately make her his wife, and introduce her at once to the participation of those dignities and public splendour which her inflated fancy assured her she was formed to adorn. Her am-

bition, panted to be distinguished in the elevated circle composed of the handsome, the wealthy, and powerful of both sexes, which she had been informed was the proper sphere of superior beauty, and that in which the lady of a grandee always moved; but too weak to resist the sophistry and artful flatteries of the marquis, her virtue soon became a sacrifice to her excessive vanity, and many weeks rolled on in a licentious indulgence of criminal pleasure, before the infatuated girl made even an inquiry into the name of the villain, on the faith of whose promises she had abandoned innocence, and devoted her youth to unceasing misery and inevitable disgrace. But, alas! for her the delirium of guilty pleasure was transient, and she awoke from the trance of unholy passion to reflect on the dreadful consequences of her credulity and folly; for though the palace of Paluda was furnished with voluptuous magnificence, and embellished with all the rare and beautiful of art and nature, the mind of Aminta was very far from contented; convinced that she was mistress of superior charms,

she was desirous of obtaining universal admiration ; she was impatient to be followed by adoring crowds—she wished to subjugate the hearts of all mankind, which she had been taught by the artful Baldivia to expect, who had repeatedly sworn that she need only to be seen, when the enamoured world would kneel in homage to her beauty ; but far from having these rapturous expectations realized, she found herself removed indeed from toil and labour—from the lowly chambers of a peasant's cabin, to a spacious and magnificent palace, but restricted to the boundaries of the domain on which it stood ; her rustic garb was exchanged for robes of expensive texture ; her glossy hair was braided with strings of pearl ; but, alas ! she had not a single person to extol and adore the richly-adorned person which the superb mirrors in every apartment reflected to her own unwearied gaze.

To live thus was no enjoyment ; Aminta was sick of seeing only the marquis and his domestics ; nor was de Baldivia less tired of seclusion than herself. Her beauty,

by possession, had become familiar—satiety succeeded the fever of passion—he was no longer solicitous to appear pleasing in the eyes of his victim, who was now, to his depraved heart, even worse than indifferent, for her ignorance disgusted, and the arrogance of her manner continually offended his pride.

In the ruin of Aminta love had certainly borne no part; by conceit and vanity she had been decoyed into guilt, as the mere instrument by which she was to be elevated to grandeur and wealth. The marquis de Baldivia had gained an interest in her selfish bosom—he was the dazzling pinnacle to which her ambition strained; but with his idea no sentiment of tenderness ever mingled; his wealth and title were of the utmost consequence to her aspiring hopes and selfish views; but his person excited even less of her admiration than did her forsaken cousin Juan's, and his mind had far less of her esteem, for she had seen Juan perform a thousand kind and charitable acts to his poor neighbours, while all the thoughts and all the wealth

of Baldivia seemed to have only one object—his own gratification.

But a new motive was shortly added to the former ones of vanity and ambition, and stimulated Aminta to be urgent with the marquis for the immediate performance of his promise of marrying her. The wretched girl had discovered that her indiscretion was likely to be attended with living exposure—a consequence terrible to her pride. The disclosure of her situation was of importance sufficient to the marquis, to rouse him from the freezing negligence into which he had sunk; though grown indifferent to her charms, and weary of her importunities, the prospect of being a father awakened in him an unusual interest.

The state of separation in which himself and the marchioness had lived, since the affair of Elvira, afforded no hope of his having legal offspring; the marquis wished to have a son, and the avowed pregnancy of Aminta constrained him to indulge her whims, and assume towards her a tenderness he was not capable of feeling.

Aminta, who perceived the interest her situation excited, became every hour more urgent and imperious in her importunities to be made a wife, till at last her ceaseless solicitations wrung from the wearied Baldivia the dreadful confession, that he had imposed on her weakness, and was unable to accede to her desire, being already a husband.

The dagger of Baldivia could not have stabbed deeper than this terrible avowal, which at once annihilated all the proud hopes of the wretched girl, and clouded the present and future with sorrow and certain disgrace. Regret, pride, and scorn, swelled the bosom of Aminta; in the wild language of rage and despair, she reviled and upbraided her unfeeling, remorseless betrayer, who for some moments listened to her ravings with stoical composure, nor attempted to stem her fury by offering plea or apology; but this calm not producing the effect he expected, darting on her a glance of ineffable contempt, he observed, her intolerable vanity and presumption had made her an easy conquest, and

that only the weakest credulity could have believed the possessor of an ancient title would unite himself with the low-born peasant girl of Valambrosia.

The tone of bitter scorn in which this short sentence was pronounced changed in an instant the furious resentment of Aminta's mind into distracting anguish and remorse ; her eyes, which had flashed with indignation, became dim ; her cheek turned pale as marble ; she wrung her hands with the action of despair ; and in accents of piercing grief, exclaimed—" My punishment is just—my pride is humbled ; my mother, Juan, though deeply injured, do not—oh, do not curse me ! I am already reaping the dreadful reward of my disobedience and ingratitude."

She attempted to fly from the presence of the now-abhorred marquis de Baldivia ; but, overpowered by grief and agony, she fell senseless at his feet. Regardless of her condition, the marquis staid not to aid or ascertain her recovery ; but giving private orders to his chief domestic, Gabriel, respecting her, he set off on the instant for

Potosí, to seek, in busier and gayer scenes, relief from the accusing monitor within, whose ceaseless reproaches created dread, though they failed to effect repentance.

The command given by the marquis de Baldivia to Gabriel was to remove Aminta to a suite of apartments in a watch-turret on the edge of the domain, and there, holding her person in confinement, supply her with every thing necessary till the period of her accouchement, when, if her child luckily proved to be a boy, it was his intention to remove the infant instantly from the possibility of imbibing the vulgar sentiments of its low-born mother.

The pride and vanity of the miserable Aminta met a shock, in the avowal that the marquis de Baldivia had already a wife, which she never after recovered—it unsettled her brain; and finding herself a prisoner in the narrow limits of a suite of gloomy chambers, and those furnished in no way superior to the cabin of her cousin Juan at Valambrosia, she at first used violent efforts to escape; but being constantly defeated, she sunk into a state of me-

lancholy, and rejecting food, would sit whole days, silent and almost motionless, dwelling, in her intervals of recollection, on the tranquil happiness she had sacrificed for a pitiless monster, who, regardless of the situation to which he had reduced her, had not only abandoned her to misery, but had also, to add to his barbarity, deprived her of liberty.

The forsaken Aminta had sufficient charms in her degraded state to inflame the wishes of Gabriel, who, closely imitating the vices of his lord, would have persuaded the wretched girl to revenge her injuries on Baldivia by permitting him to console her prison hours.

This proposal from a menial roused again the indignation of the miserable Aminta; her ambition had betrayed her into ruin, and the base avowal of Gabriel appeared, in her judgment, unpardonable presumption; mortified pride roused her into fury, and the repulsed villain fled in haste from the tempest of resentment his insolence had raised; but his retreat did not banish from the outraged

mind of Aminta the insult he had offered her pride, which added bitterness to the remorse she felt, while reflecting how basely she had deceived her mother and the worthy Juan.

“I am lost on earth!” said Aminta, “for the honest and virtuous will abhor, despise, and shun me; the child that I bear will curse its infamous mother! yes, yes, I feel that I am lost on earth; and hereafter—oh horrible! I dare not think what punishment will attend my guilt hereafter!”

Gabriel expected that his proposal would have met joyful acceptance, but finding Aminta looked on him with eyes of disdain, and chose to remember him only as one of the domestics who had bowed obsequious to her nod, he determined to punish her scorn, and mortify her pride as much as possible, by supplying her table with a coarse and scanty allowance of food, and by taking from her all the expensive and costly ornaments the marquis had profusely lavished on her person; but finding the alteration in her food occasioned no murmur of discontent, and that she bore

the loss of her jewels, not only without expressing regret or displeasure, but absolutely without notice, he began to believe she was entirely bereft of her senses ; and under this impression he was for some weeks strictly observant of the commands of the marquis, watching her every motion, and carefully preventing the possibility of her escape, by barring the doors of the turret, till finding her violence tamed by suffering, and her loud ravings for freedom sunk in melancholy despondency or total silence, he began to relax in his vigilance, finding that attendance on his prisoner took up a larger portion of his time than he wished to devote to so ungrateful a subject ; and one evening having indulged too freely with the goblet, he fancied he had made fast the outer door of the turret, when, in reality, in his haste to rejoin his companions, he had shot the heavy bolts beside the staple.

In pacing the dreary chambers of the turret, which was her practice before she threw herself on her couch, Aminta beheld the light of a bright yellow moon streaming through the half-open outward door ; as the fresh

breeze fanned her fevered temples, she gazed on the groves that circled Paluda, the scene of her ruin; the wish for liberty revived in her bosom, and she instantly flew, with joyful speed, down the spiral stairs, and pursued the road that first presented; starting as the night breeze rustled through the surrounding groves, she redoubled her speed, and soon lost sight of the hated watch-turret, and before the morning dawned, was far distant from the domain of the marquis de Baldivia.

The brain of Aminta, though unsettled, retained a tenacious remembrance of Baldivia's baseness; his inhuman desertion of her, and having made her a prisoner, rankled in her distempered mind, and her constant intention was to pursue him to Potosi, and with her own hand avenge her injuries on the wretch who had first deprived her of innocence, and afterwards condemned her to rigorous confinement.

Utterly unacquainted with the road, she sometimes lost herself in the wild intricacies of thick woods; again she toiled over the steep and perilous tops of precipices,

and crossed wide-stretching mountains, subsisting, in her fatiguing wanderings, on leaves and berries, and the milk of goats, bestowed on her by the charity of the compassionating peasants, whose cabins lay in her way, and who sometimes, with kind violence, constrained her to pass the hours of night under their humble roofs; but with the earliest dawn she would pursue her way, revenge on Baldivia giving her strength, and burning in her fancy.

Having gone a circuitous road, she unexpectedly found herself on a well-remembered path; it led to the monastery on the hill, beneath whose venerable walls she had promised to be the wife of Juan—"I am perjured," said Aminta, shuddering and covering her eyes with her hands; "I am a perjured wretch, and dare not look towards that holy altar, at which I used to worship when I was innocent."

The faint ray of reason that had been recalled by unexpectedly beholding the scenes of her former happiness, suddenly ceased to illumine her brain; utterly unconscious of where she was, or intended to

go, she descended the narrow path of the mountain, at the foot of which rose the white cabin and luxuriant plantation of her cousin Juan.

Hunger, thirst, and fatigue, added strength to the disorder of Aminta's brain; totally forgetful of past occurrences, she entered the cabin at the moment when the neighbouring peasants were assembled round the coffin of her deceased mother, for whose interment the deep bell of the monastery was awfully tolling.

The venerable father Justin, who stood at the head of the coffin, was the first to recognise the wretched maniac, whose long hair, hanging in wild disorder, tattered garments, and naked, bleeding feet, had so altered and disfigured, that her former companions failed to remember, in this deplorable state, the once fair and lively Aminta.

As these recoiled from her in disgust and terror, the pious monk advanced towards her, and pointing to the bier, said—"Behold, unhappy girl, the fatal consequences of your flight; the breathless form of your

tender, indulgent mother rests in that coffin ; her sorrows are past, for she died virtuous, rich in faith, and pronouncing pardon and blessings on her erring child ; but for the worthy Juan, whom your perfidy so cruelly deceived, life to him is a blank ; he, alas ! wishes to be, as your mother is, dead !”

Aminta’s hand rested on the coffin—
“ Dead !” said she, gazing wildly round,
“ quite cold and dead ! Well, then, you can bury us all in the same grave.”

As these words murmured from her pale lips, she sunk, exhausted and fainting, on the coffin.

“ Miserable girl !” exclaimed the deeply-affected Juan, raising her in his arms,
“ miserable girl, at what an awful moment you have returned ! but though thy error has given me much affliction, yet shall this cabin be thy asylum from scorn and want ; my labour shall shelter thee from future sorrow ; rest here, unhappy wanderer ! the heart of Juan compassionates thy errors, and never shall my lips reproach thee for the folly that has reduced thee to this state of wretchedness.”

The good father Justin approved the

forgiving charity of Juan; he then consigned her to the care of Drucilla, the mother of Basil, requesting her to do all things for the ease and comfort of the still-insensible Aminta, and prevail on her to retire to rest in her former chamber.

As soon as Aminta gave symptoms of life, the funeral procession left the cabin, and slowly wound up the hill to the village burial-place. The mother of Basil set food before Aminta, and being by nature of a curious and loquacious disposition, she would have been greatly pleased to interrogate the unfortunate creature respecting with whom she had fled from Valambrosia, where she had been, and what had induced her to come back? but utterly regardless of the old woman's repeated questions, Aminta, having eagerly devoured a slice of bread, took up a bunch of grapes, and said mournfully—"This is Juan's fruit—I am very, very hungry."

"Eat then heartily," said Drucilla, "for I am certain nobody grudges you."

"This is Juan's cabin," resumed Aminta, looking round.

“It might have been yours too,” said the old woman; “but no, not you, though truly many girls would have been glad to have the offer.”

“I sat just here that night,” continued Aminta, “and I promised—men can make promises too. Well, well, revenge means justice—does it not?”

“Revenge!” repeated Drucilla, “what are you talking of? Juan is too kind-hearted to think about revenge.”

“Juan hates me now,” resumed Aminta; “that is justice, for I hate myself. This is Juan’s cabin; yes, yes, I know; but do not tell him that I ate his fruit; most likely he will be unwilling and perhaps angry. Alas! alas! I have deserved he should be angry. Oh, my poor brain! it seems on fire.”

“Well,” replied Drucilla, “I suppose you want sleep; after you have satisfied your hunger, you shall have water and wash, and go to your bed. To-morrow, after a good night’s rest, your head no doubt will be better.”

The eyes of Aminta were turned to-

wards the plantation.—“Juan,” said she, mournfully, “would once have gathered for me the ripest and finest fruit in his plantation; but that was a long time ago, before I went to live in a grand palace, and wore gold on my robes, and pearls in my hair.”

“The saints defend me!” said Drucilla, snatching up her rosary; “why what wickedness have you been committing? Gold and pearls indeed! the Virgin forbid that you sold your virtue for such trumpery baubles!”

“Oh!” continued Aminta, with a deep-drawn sigh, “the heart of Juan would bleed if he knew what a price they cost me.”

“Cost! nonsense,” returned the old woman; “I say cost indeed! why you did not pay money for your fine robes and your pearls, for where should you get money without you stole it, which the Virgin forbid!”

“Hush, hush, no more about that,” resumed Aminta; “do not tell my poor mother; she warned me over and over again,

and said my vanity would be my ruin; but I would not attend to her advice; I only laughed at her warning."

"Ay," said Drucilla, shaking her head, "it is a very sad thing when young girls think themselves wiser than their parents."

"Don't speak of that to my mother," whispered Aminta. "Speak softly; she will overhear what we say."

"Alas!" replied the old woman weeping, "miserable creature that you are, you have broken the heart of your mother; she can no longer hear; she will never again chide your disobedience. Alas! alas! your poor mother is dead."

"Dead!" repeated Aminta; "dead! well, I shall die very soon—this is a wicked world; men use all sorts of arts to murder silly girls. If my heart had not been harder than a piece of rock, it would have broken when I found he had betrayed me with deceitful promises."

"Who do you speak of?" asked Drucilla.

"Of one who can swear and flatter," said Aminta. "There are many like him

in the world—more is the pity. But I will find him,” continued she; “I will prevent his breaking more hearts.”

She now looked so wild that the old woman retreated from her in terror. Aminta followed her to the door of the cabin, and rushing past her, said—“I suppose you belong to Juan, but say nothing about it to him, I desire; you must not tell him I was here; he will be very angry with you as well as me; so, for your own sake, say not I ventured into his cabin.”

“Why you are quite wrong in that notion, I promise you,” said Drucilla, “for Juan, with his own lips, bade me take care of you. He angry because you come here!—no, no, worthy creature that he is, Juan I know has still a kind heart towards you, ill as you have behaved to him.”

“There, I said so,” returned Aminta; “nothing in this vile world but ill-treatment! But there, no more noise and confusion about it; I shall never come here again, for I am going to die with my poor mother.”

As she spoke she darted forward, nor

once turned her head, though the old woman called loudly after her to come back; but finding she did not return, she settled it in her own mind that it was all the better she should go, for she was quite mad, and what was Juan to do with her? he would not think of marrying a mad woman sure, particularly when her granddaughter, a very pretty, modest, prudent girl, was willing to have him if he would but ask her the question. It was far best for the mad creature to go where she came from.

Having settled this matter to her own satisfaction, she began to put the cabin in order, at the same time wondering what Juan and father Justin would say, when they found Aminta had set off on her rambles again.

The very first inquiry of Juan, on the return of himself and the good priest from the funeral, was for Aminta; and the advice and consolation of father Justin was necessary to calm his grief when he was told of her departure.

Drucilla repeated what she had said

about going to her mother, and the afflicted youth would have returned in search of her to the burial-place, had not the monk reminded him that they must have met her had she took the mountain path.

The mournful countenance of Juan spoke the deep affliction of his heart, which was still fondly attached to Aminta, though he listened with respectful attention to the kind and consoling advice of father Justin, who remained with him till the bell of his convent commanded his return to religious duties.

The old woman would have spoken of her granddaughter, but Juan had no thought but for Aminta. He inquired after her looks, her conversation, and from Drucilla's account, understood her derangement.

The evening was closing in, and a storm coming on, Juan's steps turned to his plantation; the wind, loud and boisterous, shook the branches of the trees, and cast the ripe fruit in heaps beneath them. As the storm appeared to increase in violence, Juan considered it necessary to defend

some newly-planted trees. In this business he was some time busily employed, his thoughts anxiously dwelling on the wretched Aminta, but too probably exposed to all the horrors of night, rendered more terrible by the fury of the storm beating on her unsheltered head.

Having placed props beneath the young trees, and gathered up the fallen fruit into baskets, he was returning to his cabin, when his eye caught the resemblance of a figure, stretched beneath the wide-spreading branches of the great citron tree, the monarch of his plantation. Juan's palpitating heart suggested Aminta. He approached the spot with silent and cautious step, and though the wind, roughly shaking the boughs, had thickly covered her face and neck with its blossoms, fatigue had sunk her in so deep a sleep, that she was unconscious of the storm that was raging round her.

Happy to regain the miserable fugitive, Juan gently raised her from the damp earth, and bore her in his arms to her long-deserted chamber, where, though she now

and then opened her heavy eyes, and uttered a few incoherent sentences, she offered no resistance to Drucilla, who, having washed and changed the garments of the miserable creature, laid her on that humble, but peaceful pallet, which in an evil hour she had unhappily forsaken for guilt and ruin.

But, though restored to her home, and treated with tenderness, the insanity of Aminta became every day more confirmed, and her unfortunate pregnancy more evident; but these circumstances made no abatement in the kindness of Juan. As he beheld her deplorable condition, he considered she had, from these misfortunes, stronger claims on his pity and his friendship. His only resentment was against her villanous seducer, whose name, since her return to Valambrosia, had never once fallen from her lips, though, after long fits of silent melancholy, she constantly vowed to revenge her injuries on her betrayer.

Attended with a tenderness and delicacy that did honour to the feeling heart of Juan, in due time Aminta became a

mother. Her child was a boy, who, while his wretched parent, rarely visited by a beam of sense, seemed rapidly sinking to the grave, grew strong, healthy, and beautiful. His chesnut hair curled on his ivory forehead, and his bright eyes illumined the smile that dimpled his rosy mouth.

But lovely as her infant really was, Aminta appeared to regard him with horror and detestation. Drucilla sometimes attempted to place the little smiling innocent in her arms, at which times she would shriek violently, and, pushing him from her, would mutter—"The serpent! he will sting! Just so, with such deceitful eyes, the villain looked. No, no! not in my arms! not on my bosom!"

Abhorred by his distracted mother, the compassionate Juan, when the labour of the day was at an end, assisted to nurse the helpless offspring of guilt, and in a short time the poor babe would hold out his little hands to him, and evince a knowledge of his kindness by artless caresses; and while he rested his rosy cheek on the bosom of Juan, the worthy youth vowed

never to forsake him, but to supply to the poor child the place of the parents by whom it was detested and forsaken.

The pious father Justin had named the boy Octavian, and Aminta, contrary to her usual custom, was seated in the lower apartment, among the neighbours whom Juan had invited to a feast he had made on the occasion. Father Justin had endeavoured to draw Aminta into conversation, but she appeared quite unconscious of all he said. Silent and unheeding of the various praises bestowed on the beauty of her child, nothing appeared to interest or rouse her from melancholy stupor, till Basil spoke of a grand entertainment, to be given the following week at Potosi, in honour of the marquis de Baldivia's birthday.

To the utter astonishment of all present, Aminta seated herself by Basil, and laying her hand on his arm, in her usual tone and manner, asked when this grand entertainment was to take place?

Juan, delighted at this appearance of sa-

nity, instantly replied—"Next Thursday dear Aminta."

"And what day is this?" inquired she.

"Why this is Thursday," said Juan; "and as it is only a week till the time, I fear I shall not have a sufficiency of grapes and melons ripe to supply the order I have received."

"I shall make one at this grand entertainment," said Aminta.

All eyes were turned on Aminta, in pity of the derangement that had such hold of her brain.

"You go to the Baldivia palace!" said the loquacious Drucilla; "Heaven help thee, child! what wilt thou do among lords, and grandees, and fine ladies? Why they would turn up their quality noses at the like of thee."

"Grand folks! yes, yes," muttered Aminta, "I was grand once. For a little time I wore fine clothes too, all glittering with gold. Well! well! I was the dupe, and he the villain! Thursday—I remember the day; though no one thinks of me,

I shall be at the Baldivia palace—I shall not fail to be at this grand entertainment.”

The honest peasants made no reply, for they considered her words as the effect of her malady, while Juan requested Drucilla not to pursue the subject.

From this time Aminta sat no more alone in her chamber, but began to notice her child; and as, in the midst of her derangement, she had never betrayed a disposition inclined to violence or mischief, Drucilla, who was not over fond of nursing, gladly consigned the child to her arms whenever she appeared disposed to take him. Juan also rejoiced at so favourable a change in her mind, and considered her awakened affection towards the poor infant as a happy symptom of returning reason. Several times she had carried him about the plantation, and the boy never appeared more happy than when fondled by her.

Early on the following Thursday, Juan set off for Potosi with the fruit that had been ordered for the entertainment at the Baldivia palace. Aminta, with her child

in her arms, left the cabin after breakfast; but when at the dinner-hour Drucilla had prepared the repast, no one came to eat of it. Aminta was nowhere to be found. The old woman, having no inclination to lose a meal, seated herself at the board, and as she helped herself to a piece of kid, remembered what Aminta had said about being at the entertainment at Potosi.

“As sure as I am alive,” said the old woman, “the poor crazy fool is gone to the Baldivia palace. To be sure, how Juan will be vexed! As good a soul as the earth contains, only he takes no sort of notice of my granddaughter, which, to be sure, is very provoking, because she would be so comfortable in this snug cabin, and Juan would make her a loving husband—I see that by the mole on his left cheek.”

Having eaten and drank heartily, as she removed the remains, she continued to say—“I should be mighty glad to know what course I am to take in this affair. Now if my son Basil was but here, I could send him to fetch her back; but there he is gone to Potosi too, and Perez is seeking

his strayed goats, and Zabian is gone to buy a mule, and Silvio is gone to fetch home his new-married wife. The saints protect me! what shall I do? What if I send Lorenza? No, no, that will never do neither; my granddaughter, to her praise be it spoken, is a very pretty young woman, for all Juan is so stupid he has no eyes to see it; and the lackeys at the palace are so rude and so insolent, and take such liberties with young girls. No, no, it will not do to send Lorenza to the Baldivia palace, for the lackeys are to the full as wicked as their masters, and think it no sin to copy the manners of a grandee. Now, if I was not a cripple, I might run up the hill, and ask advice of father Justin. Oh, if he would but come here, how glad I should be to see the holy man! but nothing happens according to my desire; I never had any luck at wishing when I was a young woman, and now, Heaven help me! I have but a small chance in my old age."

While Drucilla was impatiently watching and waiting the return of some of her

neighbours, Aminta, with her child in her arms, had found her way to the Baldivia palace, where, entering unquestioned, she escaped the observation of the domestics, and gained the grand hall, which was hung with superb draperies of velvet, richly emblazoned with the arms of the marquis de Baldivia. At the upper end of this magnificent apartment stood the marchioness, the earl of Avondale, father Velasco, and some ladies and gentlemen, their friends, admiring a whole-length picture of the marquis, which had been newly put up; and was so finely executed that they were unanimously praising the happy skill of the artist, when the voice of Aminta made them turn round with one accord.

“Look, little wretch,” said she, pointing to the picture, “look, that is thy villain father! Yes, yes,” advancing nearer to the painting, “it is he! There are the deceitful eyes, the artful smile, so like thy own.”

“Of whom,” asked Rosaviva, trembling as she surveyed Aminta and her infant, “of whom do you speak?”

“Of whom!” replied Aminta; “why that question? Can there be another so base, so cruel, so deceitful? I speak of this boy’s father—of the villain Baldivia.”

“Retire, young woman,” said Velasco, not perceiving her insanity; “who has presumed to conduct you hither? Retire—your presence shocks this virtuous lady.”

“I was virtuous once,” resumed Aminta, “till he betrayed me to ruin with flattery and deceitful promises. He vowed he would marry me—he swore it too, yet all the while the monster had a wife.”

“Oh, Heaven defend me!” said the marchioness, sinking on the shoulder of Velasco; “what more of wretchedness have I to endure!”

The earl of Avondale had attentively examined the face of Aminta, and read in the wild brilliancy of her wandering eyes the mental malady under which she suffered. “Alas! unhappy creature!” said he, in a tone of pity, “little dependence is to be placed on thy declarations. Be comforted, I entreat you,” continued he, addressing the weeping Rosaviva, “nor

let the improbabilities suggested by a disordered brain disturb you."

"I was not mad always," returned Aminta; "my brain did not always burn thus; but he must answer for it all—he the desolator! And why," turning to the marchioness, "why should you weep? what cause have you for tears? You are Baldivia's married wife; you have a right to wear silken robes, and pearls, and gold. My head is not quite right I know; but I remember, when I was the peasant girl of Valambrosia, he promised me that he would marry me, and make me a great lady. Well, well, I believed his promises; but he left me—he shut me up in a lone dismal turret too, and that other villain Gabriel—ha, ha, ha, ha," laughing convulsively, "I am not a prisoner now! Gabriel does not bar the doors of the turret now! but mind me, this little wretch by whom I am disgraced, he has a great lord for his father. Though he is a villain, the marquis de Baldivia will own his son perhaps, for he is the very image of himself; his

hair, his eyes, his very smile—and for these I hate him, and for these—hark——”

At this moment a strain of music was heard, the folding-doors at the extremity of the hall fell back, and Baldivia, sumptuously arrayed, entered to receive from his family and friends congratulations on the anniversary of his birth.

The eyes of the marquis instantly encountered those of Aminta, and the varying colour of his cheek convinced the observant Avondale that the charges of the miserable maniac, though madly uttered, were in substance but too true.

“We are met at last,” said Aminta, advancing towards him; “we are met in the gay circle to which you were to introduce me. Here are grandees and ladies, but I have no beauty left for them to admire, Baldivia! monster! behold thy child, the proof of my folly and thy guilt! Look on him; he is healthy and beautiful, but never shall he call thee father! Examine his features; he strongly resembles thee, but never shall his arts destroy the peace of a worthy man; never shall he break the

heart of an aged parent ; never shall he seduce to infamy a confiding maid !”

“ What means this bold intrusion ?” said the marquis, endeavouring to recall the courage that had retreated before the flashing eye of Aminta ; “ who is this woman ? and whom among us does she address ?”

“ The marquis de Baldivia,” resumed she ; “ that consummate hypocrite ! that vile deceiver ! that monster who seduced me from my peaceful home at Valambrosia—who promised to make me his wife—who abandoned me at Paluda—who left me to the mercy of the villain Gabriel ! But the hour of vengeance has at length arrived—look, Baldivia, this boy is the fruit of thy adultery, hateful to me as thyself ! See, thy child is the first victim to my revenge !”

As she spoke, she tightly grasped his ivory throat, and would have strangled the unoffending babe, but for the exertions of the earl of Avondale, who tore the infant from her frenzied rage. The marchioness shrieked with horror, and was borne by

Velasco and her friends from the hall, which was now all noise and confusion.

“Wretch!” said the astonished Baldivia, “would you murder your offspring?”

“Yes,” replied Aminta, “for the deadly hate I bear his father. Is he not my disgrace—my living infamy? am I not right to murder him? This is my palace,” said she, wildly handling the rich velvet draperies; “where are my robes? Come, come, Minaretta, make haste,” continued she, tearing down the long tresses of her glossy hair, “come, make haste and adorn me; the marquis will keep his word; he will marry me to-day. Bring hither the coronet of pearls; you know he said it became my forehead. Gold and pearls for a peasant girl!—oh folly! Throw over me the embroidered veil; the sun must not tarnish my beauty. Yes, the marquis will keep the promise he made me when I fled with him from Juan’s cabin at Valambrosia. But hark you, Minaretta, I will stab the villain to the heart! At the altar, when we are surrounded by his gay

friends the grandees, I will take his life who has disgraced mine."

"Take this maniac hence," said Baldivia, stamping impatiently; "thrust her from the gates. I marvel greatly my friends did not prevent my meeting such annoyance on this day at least."

"It were well," replied lord Avondale sternly, "if such annoyance were kept for ever from the marchioness, whose health and spirits are likely to suffer from such scenes of horror and depravity."

Baldivia chose not to remark or reply to this speech, but turning to his attendants, commanded them to remove the maniac instantly from his presence.

Aminta, braving his command, clasped a pillar, and with loud shrieks persisted in remaining. The marquis, unable to bear the reproaches of Aminta, or the severity of Avondale's eye, abruptly quitted the hall, and in the next moment Juan, apprised of all that had occurred, entered, and, by soothing and entreaty, prevailed on Aminta to go home with him. Juan tenderly caressed the poor babe, whom her

frenzy would have destroyed; and on his expressing fears for its future safety, received assurances from the earl of Avondale that he would provide for its future life, and be answerable for its welfare.

Aminta suffered Juan to draw her arm through his, and without bestowing a look on her child, she was conducted by the afflicted youth to Valambrosia, where Drucilla, on hearing what had taken place at the Baldivia palace, declared she thought it was all right, if the marquis was the father of the child, why he was the fittest person to take care of it—"At any rate, it is a great weight off your hands," said she to Juan, "and he is better provided for than you could have done by him."

Juan's only answer was a deep-drawn sigh.

"And then," resumed the old woman, "if you were to marry, as no doubt you will"—Juan shook his head—"why you know a young wife might have children enough of her own, without being plagued with those of other folks."

Juan walked out of the cabin.

"Well, to be sure," said the old woman, "this Juan is not over wise, or he would

never mope about after this mad Aminta, when my granddaughter Lorenza would marry him to-morrow, if he would only say the word."

The artful Baldivia having considered the events of the morning, began to think it necessary that the marchioness should be convinced of the insanity of the wretched creature, whose violence had so terrified her. For this purpose he presented himself in her boudoir, where the gentle, affectionate Isabella was kneeling before her weeping mistress, and in the tender language of nature was entreating her to take comfort.

A thousand oaths and protestations were uttered by Baldivia, to convince the afflicted Rosaviva, that the woman who had so alarmed her was a confirmed maniac; and that till that morning he had never beheld her face, though he had often heard of the mad girl of Valambrosia.

The marchioness affected to believe, though her mind was convinced the words he uttered were "false as dicers' oaths." The resemblance of the child to the marquis, which she had not failed to remark,

was of itself sufficient to confirm the unhappy mother's veracity.

The marchioness had no child of her own, and her heart felt tenderness and pity for the innocent babe, so evidently an object of horror and hatred to its own parent; having inquired what had become of the poor child, she sent to inform the earl of Avondale that it was her particular wish to take charge of it.

The marquis de Baldivia secretly rejoiced at this resolution; but the better to deceive and disguise the interest he took in the boy, he raised various objections to the intention of his amiable wife. He bade her reflect on the inconvenience she would suffer from having a child, particularly one of low parentage, brought up in the palace.

The virtuous Rosaviva, on whose noble heart the peculiar situation of the child had made a deep impression, remained steady to her purpose, and having consulted father Velasco and the earl of Avondale, appointed an apartment and proper attendants for the little Octavian; and while she

mourned the vices of the marquis, and lamented the fate of the wretched Aminta, determined that the boy should never be sensible of the want of maternal care and affection.

The adoption of this child was a fresh instance of the virtue and goodness of the marchioness; and while the earl of Avondale felt and acknowledged her perfections, he more deeply bewailed his own misfortune, in only knowing her as the wife of a wretch, besotted with vice, and utterly incapable of appreciating the treasure he possessed. In the eyes of the adoring Avondale, Rosaviva appeared an angel of light, whose perfections and virtues became more brilliant from the dark contrast of her husband's crimes. Patient and gentle, no reproaches, no complaints, ever passed her lips, though her moistened eyelids and her pale cheek frequently betrayed the anguish of her feelings, and the bitter disappointment of her youthful affections.

Father Velasco was not deceived by the oaths of the marquis; but while he approved and applauded the virtuous resolu-

tion of the marchioness, in snatching the poor babe from destruction, and affording it protection, he never once reverted to the guilt of her husband. He saw she was sufficiently afflicted, and forbore to add to the grief his vices had already occasioned; but to the marquis himself he failed not to point out the enormity of his conduct, both in the injury done to his virtuous wife, and in the seduction and abandonment of the wretched creature whose madness it appeared originated in his perjuries and cruel desertion of her.

Baldivia heard the good father's admonitions with unusual patience, though he denied all knowledge of Aminta. The virtues of the marchioness he confessed himself ready to acknowledge and respect, though at the same time he observed they were the result of a cold constitution.

Velasco left him in disgust, for though the religious persuasion of Rosaviva differed from his own, the good father loved her with parental affection, while his judgment considered her, in temper and virtue, a model for her sex.

On the mind of Baldivia the reproofs and advice of the pious monk made no impression. His career had begun in guilt and impiety ; and though his conscience assisted the censure passed on his actions by Velasco, he was too callous, too hardened in sin, to repent the evil he had committed, or to resolve on pursuing a better course in future. He ridiculed the saintly conduct of his wife and the piety of Velasco, while he exulted in having gained the point he always wished, the separation of her child from Aminta ; and, even beyond what he had dared to hope, the boy was to be brought up in his own palace, under the immediate eye of the marchioness, whose fondness for him seemed every hour to increase.

But a dreadful reckoning was to be made at Paluda. He whose whole life had been one continued series of deceits prepared to inflict a horrible punishment on the falsehood of his menial—he who had betrayed, with the basest ingratitude, his confiding friends, was devising tortures

for the man who had imposed on his confidence.

Gabriel, on finding that Aminta had eluded his vigilance, and escaped from the watch-turret, travelled the country round in search of the fugitive; but not succeeding in tracing her, and learning from some goatherds that the body of a female had been seen floating down the falls of Lisborna, he concluded that Aminta, in her frenzy, had drowned herself; and satisfying his own mind that it was really his prisoner's body that had been seen carried away by the stream, he informed the marquis de Baldivia that she was dead.

The rage of the marquis was terrible when he found that Gabriel had imposed on him, and a punishment adequate to his offence was projecting in his brain, fierce and cruel, when new and even more disagreeable circumstances suspended for awhile the fate of Gabriel. This was the arrival of donna Olivia Loncillos at Potosi, with her husband, don Ferdinand de Perillez.

Had the bleeding spectre of her father

don Gusman stood before the eyes of Baldivia, he could not have evinced more horror than when, ignorant of her arrival, he met her at the palace of don Garcia de Averro. The hatred which donna Olivia bore the marquis had lost nothing of its rancour, from having learned from her relation, the inquisitor-general, father Hernandez, the suspicion he had always entertained of Baldivia being the murderer of her father, whose fatal end she related to the earl of Avondale, not concealing her belief of by whose hand he had fallen.

Much as the marquis de Baldivia disliked Olivia, his accustomed hypocrisy did not forsake him. Having recovered the shock her appearance, so entirely unthought-of and unexpected, had given his nerves, he affected pleasure at their meeting; and having welcomed her with many a polite compliment to Potosi, he inquired after his friends at Madrid, particularly the gallant marquis de Tormes.

“The injured marquis de Tormes,” replied donna Olivia, “died of a broken heart.”

"Of a broken heart!" repeated Baldivia. "It would be rudeness unpardonable to doubt the assertion of any lady, but particularly donna Olivia Perillez, or really this intelligence——"

"Is strictly true," insisted Olivia, fixing her eyes with a peculiar expression on Baldivia; "the marquis de Tormes actually died of a broken heart."

"You really astonish me," returned Baldivia; "I thought de Tormes so confirmed a stoic, that no event could affect his peace of mind."

"The peace of the marquis de Tormes," resumed donna Olivia, "was destroyed by the discovery of some billets which he found in a private drawer in the cabinet of his deceased wife, donna Isadora, by which he came to the knowledge of a most infamous intrigue, carried on between her, whom he had ever believed a pattern of chastity, and a pretended friend, whom he thought a miracle of honour. The name of that friend, whose hypocrisy hoodwinked the husband, and whose flatteries seduced the wife, I need not repeat

to you, marquis, who are better acquainted with the circumstances of the affair than I am."

"Why how," said her husband, don Ferdinand, "how should the marquis de Baldivia know about the affair? You forget surely how long he has been absent from Madrid."

This speech of don Ferdinand was a great relief to Baldivia, whom conscious guilt had deprived of utterance. Donna Olivia perceived and exulted in his confusion.—"The murderer of my father," said she, "and this pretended friend, this base seducer, are suspected to be the same person. Doubtless his guilty memory often reminds him of donna Isadora, once considered the most beautiful woman in Madrid. Her death was sudden, and the frightful blackness that spread over her skin might have justified the belief that she was poisoned."

Baldivia started—his face turned pale as marble—he complained of sudden indisposition and retired.

"I would not have the conscience of

the marquis de Baldivia," said donna Olivia, as she saw him depart, "to be made empress of the universe.

"Around the murderer's bed
The furies stalk, and shake their fiery brands,
And yelling in his frightened ears each night,
Give him a foretaste of that yawning gulph,
That burning deep, to which his guilt condemns
Him—that dark abyss which hope abandons!"

The earl of Avondale shuddered. He remembered the broken sentences of the dying don Henriques, and his heart sickened while he felt convinced that the angelic Rosaviva was the wife of a murderer.

"To me," continued donna Olivia, pursuing the subject which she perceived had excited general curiosity, "the intrigue between the marchioness de Tormes and this accomplished monster was long apparent; but the infatuated de Tormes was blind to his dishonour, nor once suspected the hypocrite whose assumed virtues had won his confidence. May the swift vengeance of Heaven overtake his crimes, and sweep from the earth a wretch whose heart is

black with continued guilt, and whose hands are stained with the blood of more than one victim !”

The earl of Avondale was shocked at the malignant expression of donna Olivia's countenance, and the unfeminine violence of her resentment, though he could not refuse a silent amen to her prayer, notwithstanding he disapproved the vindictive spirit that inspired her disclosure, the promulgation of which he dreaded, lest the injured and already-suffering Rosaviva should sink under the knowledge of her husband's enormous and unequalled guilt.

After his first meeting with donna Olivia, the nerves of the marquis de Baldivia became steady, for he recollected that whatever suspicions might occupy her mind, she had no actual proof of his crimes, and in this conviction he conducted himself with easy indifference in her presence, always evincing a prompt alacrity in polite attentions towards her, who saw through the veil of hypocrisy with which he covered the mortal hatred of his heart.

This specious conduct on the part of the marquis persuaded the generality of his acquaintance that he was basely calumniated by donna Olivia; "for how," said they, reasoning on the transactions she had related, "how could he appear with that steady countenance and composed mien in the presence of the daughter of him he had murdered? No, no, the marquis de Baldivia, in the gaiety of his heart, has doubtless been imprudent, and fallen into errors, but he cannot be the monster donna Olivia describes. She is prejudiced against him, and her jaundiced mind imputes to him crimes he never committed."

Thus do appearances ever deceive, for, alas! short-sighted mortals penetrate not beyond the surface of things, and the bestowing alms on the necessitous, and the affectation of sentiment, gain credit for charity and feeling, while in reality the dispenser of gold, and the declaimer on humanity, has a sordid mind, and a heart dead to pity.

The features of the marquis de Baldivia were indeed unruffled; his manner was

easy and unrestrained; he conversed with gaiety; the smile of affability sat on his lip, and courtly politeness and elegant flattery rendered him ever a welcome guest to those with whom he chose to associate. But while the exterior was calm, his bosom was hell, in which a thousand guilty remembrances continually reared their scorpion stings, to torture him and banish peace. Night to him brought no cessation of mental punishment, for in the deep silence of the midnight hour, he was constantly tossing, restless and uneasy, on his couch.

In feverish delirium he beheld the pale forms of those he had murdered hovering round him; the groans of the dying Henriques sounded in his appalled ears, and the ghastly shades of Isadora and Gusman devoted his life to misery, and foretold dreadful retribution hereafter. During the darkness of night, lights blazed in the chamber of Baldivia, and his confidential servants, Lazarillo and Sebastian, slept in the antichamber; but these were not sufficient to banish the horrors of an up-

braiding conscience, nor could the deep potions of wine he swallowed, aided by large quantities of opium, stupify him to forgetfulness, or procure him a single hour of tranquil repose; yet with the light of morning the terrors of Baldivia vanished, and he laboured to persuade himself that the horrid visions that continually haunted his fancy, were produced by ill-digested food, or wine not properly fermented.

The wealth of the marquis de Baldivia, the magnificence of his palace, the splendour of his equipages, had often excited the envy of those less gifted by fortune; but could they have looked into his mind—could they have witnessed the torture in which his nights were spent, they would sooner have exchanged conditions with the goatherd, whose cabin reared its humble roof on the steep side of a mountain, than with him whose wealth had stained his soul with murder, and terrified sleep from his pillow.

Don Ferdinand de Perillez was a man of weak intellects and indolent disposition; his friends had persuaded him that donna

Olivia was a proper match for him, and he married her, more to oblige and satisfy them than to please himself. He had been appointed by the king of Spain to a command of consequence in Quito; and Olivia, to whom he left the management of all his affairs, had directed their landing at Potosi, to see the mines and other curiosities, as she declared, but in reality to crush, if possible, the fame of the marquis de Baldivia, whose refusal of her hand, when offered by her guardian the marquis de Tormes, she had neither forgiven nor forgotten—a slight and indignity which she resolved to revenge, by relating to his friends all that had come to her knowledge of his guilty transactions while at Madrid.

Donna Olivia de Perillez, in representing Baldivia as a murderer and seducer, had enjoyed the hope of beholding him shunned and detested; but though all condemned his conduct, and abhorred the crimes imputed to him, and while listening to the horrid reports of donna Olivia, appeared to enter into her feelings of resentment, agreeing with her he was a

monster, whom all men of honourable minds ought to despise and abandon, yet no one chose to be the first to shew disaffection, or evince disapprobation ; they reflected that donna Olivia's disclosures amounted to nothing more than suspicion that the marquis de Baldivia had murdered her father, don Gusman Loncillos, and seduced the wife of his confiding friend, the marquis de Tormes ; but suspicion did not amount to proof, and a man of ancient and honourable title, like Baldivia, the possessor of immense wealth, a person of great consequence in the country, was not to be shunned by his friends, or treated with indignity, upon the bare assertion of a stranger, who brought no stronger evidence of his guilt than her own suspicions.

Gonzalo de Baldivia was acknowledged, by his own sex, to be eminently gifted in genius and talent ; his person and accomplishments rendered him fascinating to females, and the entertainments perpetually given at his palace, on which wealth and art lavished their powers, drew together all the young and gay of Peru. The mar-

chioness de Baldivia was young, beautiful; and her character, amiable and virtuous, was universally praised and admired. The society of such persons, and the pleasures and luxuries their wealth supplied, were not to be given up, because a stranger, actuated perhaps by envy or pique for some fancied offence, chose to bring, from a distant country, defamatory tales, which, if closely investigated, might prove totally groundless, and owe their invention to the relator.

Offended and greatly disappointed in not effecting the disgrace and total ruin of Baldivia's fame, donna Olivia hurried her compliant husband from Potosi, declaring its very air was polluted by the breath of her father's murderer. Don Ferdinand found every thing agreeable at Potosi, and would willingly have prolonged his stay; but being accustomed to yield his own will to that of his wife, in obedience to her command, he gave orders to his retinue to prepare for their immediate departure for Quito.

As the carriage of don Perillez passed the

magnificent palace of Baldivia, Olivia threw on it a malignant glance, at the same moment wishing that flames would destroy, or an earthquake swallow it. Don Ferdinand, naturally of a mild and quiet temper, did not enter into the revenge of his implacable wife; he beheld her inflamed countenance with a feeling of terror, lest, having no other object to vent her fury on, he should be obliged to sustain the tempest that seemed to shake her frame.

Olivia having lost sight of Potosi, exclaimed — “ Farewell, detestable place, whose inhabitants can live in friendship with a murderer ! I rejoice to quit a place so sunk in vice.”

“ Potosi is a charming town,” said don Ferdinand, “ and the rides about it are truly delightful ; I would be contented to spend my life there ; I am sorry, though, I did not see the silver mines, for don Albertus Cevennes assured me the sight would repay the trouble of descending to them.”

“ I would,” returned Olivia, “ don Al-

bertus Cevennes was buried in the silver mines, and——”

She stopped abruptly, but don Ferdinand supplied the pause by saying—
“And me with him, I suppose; I thank you for your kind wish, donna Olivia, but I am perfectly satisfied with my present situation, which I conceive to be something more comfortable, notwithstanding your temper seems a little discomposed.”

“And not without reason,” replied she; “have I not seen a murderer prosperous in villainy, surrounded by friends, and enjoying all the blessings that wealth can bestow?”

“So it appears,” rejoined don Ferdinand; “but you may be mistaken in supposing him a murderer.”

The flashing eyes of Olivia compelled don Ferdinand to make his peace, by adding—“Besides, no one can look into his mind, or know what he suffers from a guilty conscience.”

“Though I am not permitted,” said donna Olivia, “to accelerate the downfall of the monster Baldivia, I have a prophe-

tic feeling at my heart that assures me he will not triumph long; the end of the murderer of don Gusman Loncillos, the base seducer of the marchioness de Tormes, is not far distant; and he that lived in the practice of hypocrisy, in the commission of cruelty and villany, will die a death shocking to humanity—a terrible example to future ages.”

CHAPTER III.

.....

Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still, Slavery—still thou art a bitter draught; and though thousands in all ages have been made to drink of thee, thou art no less bitter on that account.

STERNE.

.....

The God of nature is not a tyrant or oppressor; if you would have the Africans believe in him, let your actions be governed by his divine precepts—imitate his forbearance, his mercy, and compassion.

THOUGH the earl of Avondale had been greatly shocked at the horrible attempt of Aminta to destroy her child, yet pity for her evident derangement, and an interest excited by the manly person and superior

manners of Juan, led him to Valambrosia, with the benevolent intention of alleviating, if possible, the misery brought upon them by the marquis de Baldivia, whose baseness and villany appeared too certain, as well from the behaviour of Aminta, as from the exact resemblance of the boy. From the talkative Drucilla the earl soon learned all she had gathered from the ravings of the wretched girl, as well as the period at which she left Valambrosia.

“ Ah, it is a sad business !” said the old woman, “ for poor Juan was finely jilted by her ; she had promised to be his wife, not but what there are others that would have suited him better ; but love is quite blind with one eye, they say, and does not see clear of the other. Nobody but Aminta for Juan ; well, he is a kind soul, to be sure, and would have made just the sort of husband I wished for my granddaughter Lorenza ; but there, I might as well expect to hold water in a sieve, as to see any wish of mine come to pass.”

Wearied of Drucilla's idle prate, the earl inquired for Juan, and was informed

he was at his work in the plantation ; the neatness and order of the little garden through which he passed delighted the earl, who stopped to admire the luxuriant beauty of the flowers, which Juan had not suffered to decay, though the trouble of their cultivation had entirely devolved on him since Aminta's fatal error ; but Juan remembered the pleasure she once took in rearing them ; and he still encouraged the hope that her diseased mind would recover its health, and her home, and her former innocent avocations, become delightful to her.

Nearly opposite the garden-gate stood the great citron tree, and under its wide-spreading branches sat Aminta ; the wildness that marked her features, when the earl before beheld her, was fled ; but she was paler and thinner ; her eyes retained little of their fire, though in their sad expression could plainly be read the melancholy insanity of her brain.

The noble heart of Avondale melted with compassion as he beheld the state of wretchedness to which she was reduced by

successful villany. As he approached the seat on which she reclined, his ear caught the words that murmured from her pale lips, which proclaimed the horrible remembrance that dwelt on her fancy—"The poor babe was innocent," said she; "Baldivia and I—yes, I know it was our guilt; but the boy looked so very like his villain father—his eyes glared—his face was black—black as Baldivia's perjured heart—dead, dead!—see now how fast one sin follows another—alas! this hand did the monstrous deed—this little hand has committed murder!" As she spoke, a general shudder agitated her frame, and she repeated, in a tone of piercing anguish—"I have committed murder!"

"Not so," said the pitying Avondale, tenderly taking her hand; "not so; poor, afflicted one, take comfort! Heaven has graciously preserved you from the commission of that crime."

Aminta hastily drew away her hand, and gazing on him for a moment, replied—"Begone instantly! you are a delusion of the evil one—you are a gran-

dee! but I shall not listen to your promises—I will not be tempted to sin again—no more silken robes—no more gold and pearls! what has a peasant-girl to do with such things? I will not be tempted to sin again—begone instantly! I hate great lords—I will not leave my mother and Juan—no, no, I will not murder any more infants!”

A tear started to the eye of Avondale, as he beheld her hopeless condition, past human relief and consolation; and he shuddered as he reflected on the account that would hereafter be demanded from him whose vices had defaced so fair a form, and annihilated the sovereignty of reason.

Juan remembered the humane conduct of the noble Englishman on the eventful day that Aminta's distraction carried her to the Baldivia palace, when the murder of her infant had been projected, through resentment to its guilty father—Juan recollected the compassion evinced by the earl, and that the little Octavian had been left, at his particular desire, under his pro-

tection; he now approached, and respectfully addressing him, mentioned the hapless boy.

“He is well satisfied and happy,” said Avondale; “the little urchin appears to improve daily; and indeed the chief object of my present visit to Valambrosia is to bear to you, my worthy friend, a message from the marchioness de Baldivia, who requests you will come to the palace, whenever inclination leads you, to see the child.”

Juan’s looks were expressive of grateful thanks.

“The marchioness,” continued Avondale, “has no wish that her adopted son should forget his earliest benefactor, the good and worthy Juan.”

“Octavian her adopted son!” repeated Juan, in a tone of surprise; “can the virtuous marchioness de Baldivia condescend to adopt the unhappy offspring of guilt?”

“The marchioness,” replied Avondale, “virtuous and amiable herself, pities, from her soul, the error of its unfortunate mother, and deplores, with sincerest grief, that her mind is incapable of receiving

the consolation her humanity would gladly afford."

"May Heaven's choicest blessings be showered upon her!" said Juan; "the wretched Aminta is incapable of understanding her goodness, or of feeling gratitude for the protection of her child; but for me, I will constantly pray, that the vices of her husband may, in no shape, attach to her, or wound her peace."

The earl sighed—he knew her peace was wounded, and that in active benevolence alone she found relief from the agonies of corroding sorrow.

"The marquis de Baldivia has much to answer for," said Juan; "for his wife is young, virtuous, and beautiful."

The heart of the earl assented that she was all that is perfect in woman.

"The marquis," resumed Juan, "has not only robbed this unhappy creature of her chastity and her reason, but he has also cruelly destroyed all the happy prospects of my youth. Aminta was mine by her own voluntary promise, and the consent of her

mother, whose heart was broken by her flight. I was born a peasant—I was reared in humble, honest industry; the bread I eat is procured by the labour of my hands; but not for all the wealth of Potosi, would I exchange consciences with the marquis de Baldivia; and never do the ravings of Aminta sound in my ears, but an execration rises in my heart against her seducer.”

The earl of Avondale wrung the hand of Juan, and assured him of his friendship: with Drucilla he left his purse, and bade her procure Aminta every indulgence that gold could purchase. The earl had set out for Valambrosia with the hope of proving that Baldivia was not the betrayer of Aminta; but the time of her elopement so exactly tallied with the period of his absence—Drucilla’s account also of the palace of Paluda, which she had picked up from the ravings of Aminta—all confirmed his guilt, and proved that while he pretended to be transacting the affairs of government at Lima, he was living in licentious retirement with the miserable

girl, whom his arts had prevailed on to leave the abode of peace and innocence for splendid infamy.

“The worthy Juan,” said lord Avondale, “loves Aminta, even now degraded as she is; she had promised him her hand, and he had been blest with the approbation of her mother. Unfortunate young man! his fate is even harder than mine; he was persuaded he had inspired a mutual affection, and felt the anguish of disappointed hope; even now he dotes where his reason despises; such misery has never tortured my heart! Oh no! dearest, loveliest Rosaviva! thou art worthy to be loved, for thou art virtue’s fairest image; harder—much harder, worthy Juan, is thy destiny than mine!”

Father Justin, who had been the instructor of Juan’s youth, did not forsake him in the days of his affliction; he knew how fondly the youth loved the erring Aminta, and he pitied and consoled the sorrows he had not the power to heal. For a few weeks longer, Aminta wan-

dered, the spectre of her former self, about the garden and plantation, till at length weakness confined her to her pallet.

“She will die!” said Juan, “and what will be my consolation for her loss!”

On the morning of her last day, Aminta spoke rationally; and when father Justin entered her chamber, she desired to be left alone with him—“Holy father,” said she, “I have seen my mother.”

The monk shook his head.

“You doubt my assertion,” continued Aminta; “you believe my head still wanders; but you are in an error; my mother, at midnight, called me, as she was wont when living; I opened my eyes, and she stood before me; she pressed her hand on my forehead, and my burning brain became cool; the painful throbbing of my temples ceased—‘A few hours of reason are given you for repentance,’ said she; ‘delay not to make your peace with Heaven; at this hour to-morrow your mortal sufferings will cease.’ I stretched out my arms to clasp her neck; but the voice had ceased, and I beheld her no more.”

Father Justin was convinced she had seen her mother in a dream, but Aminta persisted in believing that she was to die at midnight ; and under this impression, she spent the day in preparing for the awful change. She made confession of her sins, and prayed for her seducer ; humbly on her knees she entreated the forgiveness of Juan, and recommended to his care her child ; weak and fatigued, she was again laid on her bed, where she fell into a tranquil sleep.

It was near midnight when she awoke, and complaining of thirst, she was raised in her bed, and having drank, she inquired the hour. Neither father Justin nor Juan replied ; but the deep bell of the convent announced midnight.

“ Farewell,” said Aminta, faintly grasping the hand of Juan—“ farewell, my best, my truest friend ; pray for, and pity the guilty Aminta.

‘ I hear a voice you cannot hear—
I see a hand that beckons me away.’”

The arms of Juan encircled her atte-

nuated form ; but the spirit had departed for ever.

The intelligence of Aminta's death soon reached the Baldivia palace ; the tears of the marchioness fell to the memory of the unhappy victim of error ; but Baldivia, so far from feeling regret, rejoiced that he was delivered from any farther trouble or annoyance from her.

Drucilla, as she assisted to prepare the pale, breathless corse of Aminta for the grave, and strewed in her coffin the rich, blooming flowers Juan had divided from their stems, in honour of the hand that had planted and reared them, felicitated herself that all the disagreeable impediments that lay in the way of her schemes and wishes, were now luckily removed, and her granddaughter had at last a fair chance of being noticed, and ingratiating herself with Juan, and engaging him to make her his wife—a match the old woman wished to see concluded with all possible and decent dispatch, because she considered it high time that Lorenza was settled in life.

To accomplish this purpose, she sent

for her without loss of time, to give her discreet instructions respecting the mode of conduct it would be proper for her to adopt, in order to attract Juan, and appear amiable in his eyes—"You see, child," said Drucilla, "that the devout prayers I made, night and morning, to saint Theresa, for your sake, have not been thrown away; you see, I say, they have prevailed."

"Why, what did you pray for, mother," asked Lorenza, "and what have you prevailed in?"

"Oh, how dull you must be," said Drucilla, "to ask that question! does not Aminta lie dead and cold in that coffin? why, what else should I pray for, but that the poor, crazy soul should be released out of her misery; and you," continued the old woman, "ought to be very thankful to me for having, on your account, bent my old, stiff knees so often."

Lorenza thanked her grandmother heartily, but declared she did not rightly comprehend what she had to do with Aminta's death; but for all that, she would follow her advice in all things.

“Remember then,” said Drucilla, “to weep violently when you see Juan affected and shedding tears.”

“But how,” asked Lorenza, “can I weep if I have no cause, and when I do not feel sorry?”

“You can make believe,” replied the old woman, “and that will answer quite as well as real tears; and be sure to sob, and be loud in lamentation at the funeral, because that will shew that you have a tender heart, and feel for Juan’s grief; and mind, child—always be near him and wait upon him with all attention, and try your best to console him in his trouble, for he takes on mightily after Aminta; but never mind that, she was his first love, and a bellowing cow soonest forgets her calf, and violent sorrow never lasts; and now she is gone, as I said before, he will, no doubt, take notice of you, who are, to be sure, a very pretty girl, and the very image of what I was at your age.”

Lorenza looked at her grandmother, whose nose and chin almost met, and won-

dered to hear her say she had once been pretty.

“Cast your eyes round, child,” continued the old woman, “and see how comfortable every thing is in this snug, pleasant cabin, furnished, you see, with plenty of necessary articles, all ready at hand for use; and then, as to the young man himself, I question if you can meet his equal, in his station, in all Peru—careful, sober, industrious, and religious too; mind me, Lorenza—the young man, I say, is the sort of person for any girl to like.”

“And yet Aminta did not like him,” said Lorenza.

“No,” resumed the old woman—“no; the devil had put it into her head to run away with a grandee, and there is the end of it,” pointing to the coffin; “she brought shame and disgrace upon herself—broke her poor mother’s heart, and there the silly, wicked thing lies a corpse, before she had seen nineteen.”

“Ah, poor girl!” said Lorenza, sighing, “she has come to an unfortunate end.”

“ Ay, very true; if she had listened to good advice,” replied the old woman, “ she might have been alive and happy; but it is much better for you as it is; she is dead, and out of the way of your preferment; and as I was going to observe, the young man is tall, well-shaped, and comely, that is, I mean he was very comely, before he got so thin, and lost his fresh, rosy colour, with fretting and vexation about this crazy-headed creature that now lies dead, to my great comfort and satisfaction; and as his sorrow will, no doubt, end with her burial, he will soon, I dare say, get fat and ruddy again; so mind, Lorenza, and take care not to neglect this chance through your own folly; take my advice, which is prudent, and given for your interest; mind what you are about, Lorenza; try to make yourself agreeable to Juan, and I warrant he will soon forget Aminta, and make you his wife, and mistress of this snug cabin.”

But here Drucilla, with all her boasted sagacity, was mistaken; the affections of Juan died with Aminta; he was no more

to be attracted by female beauty; his happiness and his health had perished together. The nights of Juan had passed in watching the couch of Aminta, and during the day he laboured in the plantation. Want of sleep and fatigue had stolen the lustre from his eyes, and withered the roses on his cheeks; grief and love bore heavy on his youth, and dried up the springs of life; yet Juan made no complaint of ill health, he smiled on his neighbours, and endeavoured to speak cheerfully to them, but his heart was broken.

The tears and attentions of Lorenza, who strictly followed the advice of her grandmother, were entirely unnoticed by Juan, whose sorrows “were past hope, past cure.” The pale and silent image of woe; he followed the remains of Aminta to the burial-place of her mother; and when the earth was thrown over her coffin, with a deep groan he fell on her grave. Lorenza shrieked; but her cries pierced not the ear of Juan—he was dead.

The venerable father Justin raised his eyes, full of the big drops of sorrow, to

Heaven—"Unfortunate pair," said he, "you are united in death; your souls, I trust, will enjoy felicity in a better world; peaceful be the repose of Juan and Aminta, and for their destroyer, may Heaven give him time for repentance!"

The body of Juan was borne by the weeping peasants back to his cabin.

When Drucilla heard the opinion of father Justín, that Juan had died of a broken heart, she said it was a rare instance when a man died for love, which, to her thinking, was a very silly, idle thing—"And provoking too," added she, "for I had fixed upon him for a husband for Lorenza; but there, I never had, no, nor ever shall have, any sort of luck at wishing."

"Yes," replied her son Basil, "yes, ill luck, mother! according to your own account, you have plenty of that."

"Many a true word spoke in jest, Basil," resumed the old woman, "for I fear I shall live to see Lorenza an old maid, and that will be ill luck enough."

The earl of Avondale attended the fu-

neral of Juan; and as he lingered near his grave after the villagers had retired, he agreed with the pious Justin, that Heaven had been merciful in removing both him and Aminta from life.

“It is most true,” said the earl, “they could no more be happy on earth, and Heaven has indeed been merciful in removing them from misery.”

As the earl turned his steps towards Potosi, he was inclined to envy Juan his quiet resting-place. “His heart no longer throbs with hopeless love,” said the melancholy Avondale; “but I, alas! I am condemned to live, adore, and suffer!”

The little Octavian was clasped with more tender fondness to the bosom of the marchioness de Baldivia, as she remembered that his wretched mother and his benevolent friend Juan were both separated from him by death. The lovely child soon attached himself to his kind patroness, from whose apartments he was seldom absent, where the earl of Avondale devoted many hours to playing with and caressing him. That the child was

beloved by Rosaviva would have been sufficient to render him a favourite with the earl; but his own beautiful countenance and engaging ways made an interest for him in a bosom so full of tender and noble sentiments, to which the circumstance of his having saved his life added strength.

The marquis heard of the death of Juan with much satisfaction, as the boy, on whom he looked with pride and pleasure, had now no peasant relatives who would presume to approach the palace to claim his affinity. He was delighted to see the boy so idolized by Rosaviva and the earl, though he expressed no gratification, and rarely appeared to notice the child; and if he did bestow on him an accidental glance, it was merely to observe the urchin was indulged to folly, and that he was particularly fortunate in meeting such protection. He would then inquire of the marchioness what she intended making of him, to which she would reply, till education had unfolded his understanding, it was impossible to tell of what he would be capable.

“ I will first store his mind,” said the marchioness; “ it will then be time enough to think of promoting his fortune.”

The marquis approved her intention, for it was exactly his own; but he contented himself with saying he wished the soil might be worth the culture.

The good and pious Velasco made many efforts to convert the profligate Baldivia, and convince him of the sinfulness of his life; he repeated to him the declaration made by Aminta in her last hours, when reason was restored; but all his rhetoric failed to convince the marquis, who affected to disbelieve the sanity of Aminta's brain at any moment before her death. He utterly denied Octavian being his child, protesting he had no knowledge whatever of his miserable mother, whose accusation of him, and dying declaration, proceeded from a distempered fancy, and was nothing more than the effect of incurable madness—“ which might, holy father,” said Baldivia, “ have fixed upon and accused you of having seduced and abandoned her.”

The venerable man made the sign of the cross, and most devoutly thanked the goodness of Heaven, that his conscience was entirely clear from guilt so atrocious.

Baldivia smiled contemptuously, as his eye glanced over the time-furrowed features, and the spare, bending figure of the self-mortified monk, in whose peaceful bosom all sensual appetites were indeed subdued; where youth, "glowing with the purple light of love," could create no tumultuous desire.

The business of Velasco's whole life had been charity—his only earthly ambition was to instruct the ignorant, and reclaim the sinner, while the most fervent wish of his heart was to soften the afflictions and increase the happiness of his fellow-men.

The miseries of the Africans in the silver mines of Potosi had long seriously occupied the thoughts of the benevolent monk, who, not content with commiserating their sad condition, was continually and anxiously employed in laying down plans for their better accommodation, and for lightening their excessive labour; but

the first and chief step towards amending their condition, he piously believed, was to convert them to Christianity, as, under every hardship and suffering, religion would be a solace to their minds, and their sure guide to everlasting happiness. With a truly Christian zeal, Velasco had entered into a minute examination of the dreadful situation of Baldivia's slaves in the mines; and having ascertained that their food was not only scant, but very bad—their huts dark, low, and close—their labour infinitely beyond their strength, and their spirits utterly broken by the brutal tyranny and barbarous tortures they endured from their savage task-masters, he represented to the marquis, with truth and circumstantial exactness, their misery, their hardships, and sufferings, which destroyed their health and vigour, and considerably shortened their days.

The good Velasco, with pathetic eloquence, dwelt on the subject, but without producing the least compassion in the bosom of Baldivia. To the affecting narration of the hardships, oppressions, and mi-

series of his slaves, he coldly replied—
“The black devils could only be ruled with a rod of iron; that feeding them well would increase their natural indolence; and that the torture was necessary to terrify them into obedience.”

The good Velasco shuddered, and entreated; but all he could obtain from the unfeeling Baldivia was a promise not to oppose his endeavour to convert his miserable slaves to Christianity, though at the same time he protested he yielded this point out of respect to the holy father, and to oblige him, for his own opinion conceived them much better and happier in their present state of ignorance.

The marquis de Baldivia had a different motive to that he expressed to the pious monk for yielding the slaves to his persuasions. It was the hope of getting rid of his tiresome admonitions—his perpetual reproofs, and removing him from a too strict observance of his actions, on which he never failed to pass a just and severe censure.

In pursuance of the permission obtained

from the marquis, Velasco became a constant visitor to the mines, where his kindness, his skill in medicine, and his diffusive charity, soon gained him the respectful attention of the simple, affectionate Africans, among whom many, profiting by his instruction, began to comprehend the great truths of revealed religion, and consented to be baptized; who, as their understandings expanded, became more attentive to their own appearance, and the management of their food. Gradually their huts assumed an air of order and cleanliness that promised them a degree of comfort at the noonday hour, and in the evening, when the setting sun released the miserable creatures from toil, to seek the repose their fatigued and fevered bodies required.

But in vain were the doctrines of faith preached to Ozembo, Yarilla, and Zoan. They listened in respectful silence, without evincing, by look or gesture, that they were either affected or convinced; though greatly superior in intellect to their unfortunate brethren, and comprehending more

clearly, and speaking the Spanish language with greater ease and fluency, they seemed totally unmoved by the pathetic eloquence of Velasco, though he preached to them with all the kindness and warmth of a heart zealous for their comfort here, and the eternal bliss of their souls hereafter.

Ozembo and his family listened with perfect indifference, neither seeming comforted by the promises he held forth to believers, nor terrified by the judgments denounced against such as refuse proffered grace. The good Velasco failed to convince them that suffering on earth was necessary to the attainment of felicity in heaven, nor could they believe that God could possibly be just while he decreed his creatures misery.

It was with deep affliction the good monk beheld the obduracy of their hearts, and their obstinacy in error; he saw them live together in perfect love and harmony, mutually cheering, assisting, and striving to lighten the labours of each other; he beheld their hut nicely clean, and entwined with such wild flowers and hardy shrubs

as would vegetate in that scanty soil, and he wept the tears of heartfelt grief and pity, while he reflected that men professing themselves Christians, had, by violating the precepts of their holy religion, hardened the hearts of those devoted ones against their God, and made them deaf to his invitations.

On his return to the palace, he was interrogated by the gentle Rosaviva respecting his success among the slaves, and how the work of conversion went on in the mines.

Velasco was pleased to be so questioned, because he knew that, with the power, the marchioness had the heart, which, feeling for, would amend the condition of those wretched creatures. He expatiated largely on their wants, and the hardness of their labour for so many tedious hours without intermission. He spoke of the wretchedness of their huts, and the coarseness and scantiness of their food, till the bosoms of the marchioness and the noble Avondale were deeply interested for the unhappy

beings whose toil and sufferings heaped the luxurious banquet, and spread the couch of down, for their unfeeling tyrannous lords, while their own hard morsel was steeped in tears, and their own harassed frames were stretched on withered leaves, which they were compelled to collect at meridian, when they were insulted with the mockery of an hour's cessation from labour.

The lovely eyes of Rosaviva overflowed at the recital of misery, while the glowing cheek of Avondale spoke his indignation, his utter abhorrence of slavery, and contempt of the wealth procured by the agonies of men whom he considered in nothing inferior to himself, instruction alone excepted.

Velasco spoke in admiration of the family of Ozemba. He described the mild graces of the interesting Yarilla, and expressed his deep regret and disappointment in not having been able to console their sorrows, to teach them patience under their misfortunes, or convince their minds of the errors of their belief, in hav-

ing failed to bring them to acknowledge the true Creator.

The lovely marchioness and her noble-minded cousin listened with an interest beyond curiosity to the venerable Velasco's account of these slaves, and mutually expressed a wish, when he next visited the mines, to accompany him.

The earl of Avondale had noticed the taste for cultivation which the good monk mentioned as conspicuous round the hut of Ozembo, and he amply provided himself with such seeds as he supposed would be useful, for food as well as ornament, to the industrious Africans.

The generous, amiable, and compassionating Rosaviva lost no time in dispatching to her husband's slaves such articles as her own judgment, aided by the advice of father Velasco, pointed out as most necessary to their comfort; and while she selected clothing appropriate to the climate and their condition, she severely reproached the selfish coldness of her heart, that in lamenting its own sorrows and privations, had been unmindful of the deeper woes.

and necessities of the cruelly-oppressed Africans, who were compelled to labour in a state of the most abject wretchedness.

“My own happiness,” said Rosaviva, as she wiped the pearly drops from her eyes, “my own happiness is lost for ever; but let me not, in the weak indulgence of unavailing sorrow—let me not sinfully forget, that Heaven has bountifully bestowed on me the means to contribute to that of others. Wealth was never estimated by me, but as giving me the power to remove the wants and necessities of the less fortunate. Let me then try to meliorate the sad condition of Gonzalo’s slaves; and let me not stop at this—let me endeavour to persuade him to restore them to liberty; he is sufficiently rich without the produce of these mines. Oh that they had remained undiscovered! how much innocent blood would have been spared—how heavy an account of guilt avoided!”

Such were the thoughts and intentions of the amiable wife of Baldivia; but, alas! she knew not the flinty hardness of the heart she wished to soften, nor the sordid

venality of the mind she hoped to persuade to relinquish the wealth of the mines. She knew not that a single ounce of silver appeared of equal value in his eyes with the life of an African, and that the working of the mines sent yearly to the grave five hundred heart-broken slaves.

On a day uncommonly sultry, the benevolent party, on their errand of mercy, reached the mountain whose bowels contained the silver mines, into which having descended by the usual means, a basket attached by strong ropes to a windlass, they reached a scene of rude magnificence, which at once convinced the marchioness and her noble relation that the slaves had natural talent in common with their tyrants, which only wanted their happier cultivation.

Near the entrance, a wide square presented itself, in the centre of which the converted Africans had reared a rude altar, formed of silver ore, on the summit of which they had placed a cross, the emblem of their newly-adopted faith. Affected even to tears, Velasco sunk on his knees before the altar, and with devout fervour prayed

for the hapless beings whose faith had led them to construct a remembrance, which, being continually before their eyes, would give patience to bear their toils, and inspire them with hope of eternal reward.

Rosaviva and the earl silently joined the prayer of the holy father, which being ended, they proceeded on their way, directed by an astounding noise, to a deeper part of the mine, where they beheld the male slaves separating, with huge hammers, the silver from rocks nearly composed of that precious metal. Every nerve of the unhappy labourers seemed strained by their unremitting toil, while perspiration ran in streams from their bodies.

Velasco spoke kindly to them all, and bade the pitying Avondale remark Ozembo, in stature taller than the rest, as he stood on a projection of the rock, and with muscular arm splintered and shivered more silver at one stroke than the other slaves seemed to do at several efforts.

“They have all an appointed task,” said Velasco, “and Ozembo labours with preternatural strength, that, when his own task is finished, he may assist his wife,

who, delicate and fragile, is unequal to the toil imposed upon her."

Rosaviva shuddered, and taking the offered arm of Avondale, passed forward. Velasco, at the next excavation, pointed out Yarilla, who was staggering under the weight of a basket which she had filled with lumps of silver, and was endeavouring to convey it to the receptacle prepared for the reception of her daily task; but weak, and unable to accomplish her intent, she cast round her a look of melancholy despondency, groaned, fainted, and fell to the earth with her burthen. The inhuman inspector of the slaves, with hasty strides, approached the senseless creature, and prepared to rouse her to animation by the sharp application of the whip, which, with brutal action, he brandished over her inanimate form.

Ozembo, who had descended from the rock, beheld this scene, and rushing forward, his countenance convulsed with rage and apprehension, would have felled the savage inspector to the earth, had not the threatened blow been withheld by the

earl of Avondale, who forcibly restrained his arm.

The terrified marchioness shrieked, and rushed between the inanimate Yarilla and the inspector, who was ordered by Velasco to respect the presence of the marchioness de Baldivia, and retire.

Rosaviva, like a pitying angel, assisted to raise, and then rubbed the temples and hands of Yarilla with a volatile essence, while the commiserating Avondale supported her graceful person in his arms.

Zoan had now approached, and observing the attentive kindness of the strangers, his manly eyes filled with drops of grateful sensibility. Even the stern bosom of Ozembo felt kindness towards Christians, as he beheld them regarding with compassion, and employed in the humane act of restoring his beloved Yarilla, who, being at length recovered, while she returned the caresses of her husband and brother, in a voice of sweetness and gentleness also expressed her gratitude to the humane strangers.

The desire of the marchioness being

made known to the inspector, Yarilla was permitted to quit the mines before the stated hour, the considerate Rosaviva not believing her sufficiently recovered to pursue her fatiguing employment.

Velasco next led them to a more distant part of the mine, where the silver was melted, and ran like a river into the cooling cisterns, from whence it was taken purified and fit for the various purposes of coinage and ornament.

In this part of the mine the heat was so excessive, that they could only take a hasty view of the labour performed by the nearly-suffocated slaves, who were every hour exchanged.

“This department of the mine,” said the monk, “is more fatal to the constitutions of the wretched slaves than the hardest labour; the vapour arising from the melting silver is so pernicious, that it kills hundreds of these poor creatures annually.”

“And happy, in my opinion,” rejoined the earl, “is he that dies.”

“Happy indeed,” resumed Velasco, “if he has embraced Christianity; for to live a

slave in the mines of Potosi is to have attained the height of human wretchedness."

"Surely," said Rosaviva, "surely, good father, the marquis has never visited the depths of these mines. He cannot know at what a horrible price he obtains his wealth. Oh, certainly he must be ignorant of the sufferings of these unhappy Africans; but I will represent to him their sad condition; I will plead their cause; I will persuade him to be satisfied with the wealth already procured, which has cost the lives of so many human beings."

"Were you to plead with the tongue of an angel," thought Velasco, "you would not touch the adamantine heart of Baldivia;" but he expressed not his thoughts; he said not Gonzalo de Baldivia is dead to humanity, and regards these unhappy creatures less than he does his mules and dogs.

The heart of the marchioness could endure no more spectacles of human misery, and she expressed a desire to quit the mines, and breathe a purer air; but the charitable motive of their visit not being

accomplished, at the midday meal Velasco conducted the marchioness and the earl of Avondale to the side of the mountain, where the huts of the slaves were crowded together, wretchedly and inconveniently constructed.

The marchioness and the earl, having tasted their unpalatable food, expressed to each other their utter astonishment how the unhappy creatures were supported, and how it was possible they could labour, when so little nourishment was afforded to produce strength. At each hut they visited, the earl and Rosaviva left behind them such useful gifts as they believed would be conducive to the health and comfort of the poor Africans.

The dwelling of Ozembo was at a distance from the rest; it stood alone, and was built at the base of a rock, out of which a stream of clear water gurgled, and fertilized a small plat of ground, neatly enclosed, in which appeared a few lentils, a little Indian corn, and some salad herbs. Near the entrance of the hut was a rude bench, shadowed from the scorching beams of the sun by

the long branches of a weeping birch, beneath which the interesting family were seated, taking their homely meal.

As the strangers approached, Yarilla came forward to meet them, a grateful tear glistening in her eye, and invited them to enter the hut. Here an air of cleanliness and order evinced superior minds, while various articles of usefulness, made by Ozembo and Zoan, discovered taste and ingenuity. They had also contrived a window in their habitation, which, admitting light and air, diffused a degree of cheerfulness unknown in the other huts.

Towards the beautiful Yarilla, for beautiful she was, in spite of colour, the marchioness felt herself powerfully attracted: her voice, her manner, her smile, her person, were all inexpressibly sweet, pensive, and graceful; while the warm affection that evidently subsisted between herself, her husband, and brother, was, to the feeling mind of Rosaviva, an affecting confirmation of what she had constantly believed, that love in innocent bosoms will survive the heaviest misfortunes, nay,

greatly soften the sharpest and severest trials of adversity.

The pious Velasco, though he had hitherto failed to convince this interesting family of their errors, never for a moment lost sight of the great work of conversion. Among other gifts to Ozembo, he presented him with an ebony crucifix, exquisitely carved. Perceiving he greatly admired the workmanship, he endeavoured to make him sensible that on the cross was delineated the figure of the blessed Redeemer, who had been a voluntary sacrifice for the sins of mankind, who, spotless and entirely without sin himself, had died an ignominious death, and shed his innocent blood for the salvation of all the human race.

The good father paused, while Ozembo, having gazed intently on the cross, after a moment's meditation, repeated—"For all the human race! said you he died for all the human race?"

"Ay," replied Velasco, "for all without distinction, or respect of persons. The gracious and merciful Saviour died for all

mankind, passed himself from death to life—to open for them the gates of heaven—to bestow on all the children of earth eternal happiness.”

Again Ozembo appeared to ruminate, then fixing a serious and earnest gaze on the face of the venerable monk, he asked —“ Are the Africans slaves to white men in the kingdom of your God ?”

“ Assuredly not,” replied Velasco ; “ no, Ozembo, there are no slaves in heaven ; in that abode of blissful happiness all men are free.”

“ How,” resumed Ozembo, in a tone of surprise, “ and does not your God despise a black man ? does he really regard an African with the same degree of favour as a Spaniard ?”

“ The difference of complexion, be assured, Ozembo, has no influence over the unerring justice of the Creator. Yes,” continued Velasco, “ a black man is equally acceptable in the eyes of the Omnipotent, if he believes in him—confides in his merciful protection—worships him with grateful sincerity, following his di-

vine precepts, and obeying his commandments. The just God, Ozembo, examines the heart, not the colour of the skin ; and the soul of a good and pious African will assuredly obtain his grace and favour equally with that of a white man."

Ozembo looked stedfastly at the crucifix, shook his head mournfully, and returned it again to the hand of the monk.—" You say," said Ozembo, " that your God is compassionate, merciful, and good—a God of justice. Look here," continued he, displaying his scarred and blistered hands ; " look on this debasement. In his own happy country, Ozembo was chief of a hundred warriors, whose shoulders bend beneath no other weight than a quiver full of sharp-pointed arrows, whose hands only labour to fit them to the string of the bow, or head the lances with which they war against their enemies.

" Look on that fragile creature—she is the daughter of Mambuka, the king of our tribe. The virgins of the Coral island thought themselves honoured to attend on Yarilla, and now, oh terrible reverse!

her brother and herself are slaves; her delicate form is bowed to the earth with debasing toil, and we, her husband and brother, we who adore her, behold her sufferings without the power to end them."

As he spoke he clasped the weeping Yarilla to his heart, then again addressing Velasco, said—"When the God of the white man avenges the oppressions of the injured Africans, then will I believe in him, and pay him worship."

"Yet hear me, Ozembo," said Velasco, eagerly; "listen patiently while I endeavour to remove your errors, and convince you of the truths necessary to your salvation."

"Your arguments," replied Ozembo, sternly, "are lost on me. If you would convert me to the Christian faith, let me behold your nation's conduct agree with its profession. Your precepts are indeed merciful, but your actions most inhuman tyranny. You tell me your God has no slaves; is man then greater than him you call his Maker and King, that he, by acts of violence, of fraud and cruelty, pre-

sumes to gall with iron yokes the shoulders of his fellow-creatures? white men preach of pity and mercy with their lips, while their hard hearts conceive, and their barbarous hands inflict tortures. It cannot be that white men themselves believe what they utter respecting future rewards and punishments, for if they did, they would be careful to deserve the one, by forbearing to act the wicked deeds that must justly condemn them to the other. You tell us we must not steal, nor commit murder, nor covet our neighbour's wives; if these deeds offend the white man's God, and doom the perpetrators to flaming hell, why is unhappy Africa robbed of her children? why are we here condemned to slavery? why do these eyes daily behold my wretched countrymen dying beneath the torture, whose only crime is bewailing their lost happiness, or wanting strength to perform the tasks imposed by their inhuman tyrants? why do we continually lament our females torn from our arms and basely violated?"

The marchioness wept the miseries of

the Africans ; the earl of Avondale thought a hermit's cell was to be preferred, his bed of straw and beechen cup, to all the pomps and splendours of luxury, procured by the tears and blood of these unhappy slaves.

The pious Velasco raised his meek eyes to heaven ; he felt the accusations of Ozembo were just ; he had too frequently witnessed the oppressions, the sufferings, and hardships of the wretched Africans ; and he mentally supplicated for them and their tyrants.

Ozembo watched the countenance of the monk ; but finding he made no reply, continued to say—" Restore me, and the rest of my injured countrymen, to our dear native homes, from which we have been inhumanly torn ; then will I be convinced that he whose image is figured on that cross shed his blood for my sins, and died for my salvation—then will Ozembo, in the shade of his own pleasant bower, try to convert his brethren to the Christian faith—then will I think yourselves believe the Deity, which all your actions now deny. On these terms only will Ozembo become a

convert to Christianity—on these terms alone offer his prayers to the white man's God."

The bell was now heard that remanded the slaves to their labour in the mines.

"Our toil must be renewed," said Ozembo, "till the setting sun relieves our harassed bodies, and gives us a few hours respite from fatigue. God of the Africans! how long wilt thou be deaf—how long wilt thou endure to see the white man's foot crush the neck of thy children!"

Ozembo bent his stately form and left the hut.

Zoan and Yarilla, affected by the tender concern evinced by Rosaviva and the earl of Avondale, fell at their feet; and as their warm tears flowed on the hands extended to raise them, they together exclaimed—"Kind, generous Christians, we feel and thank your pity—we believe that the hearts of all white men are not cruel—all are not tyrants and oppressors. May the Great Spirit, the God of the Africans, protect you from every evil—may no inhuman hand drag you from your native

groves, or condemn you to the miseries of slavery !”

The marchioness returned to Potosi, with a resolve to exert all her power and influence with her husband in behalf of his slaves; but many days elapsed before an opportunity occurred, for the marquis was either absent on parties of pleasure, or surrounded by guests at home, who made the business of their lives amusement, and, like himself, appeared afraid of having an unoccupied hour, in which reason might be heard, and reflective thought lead to pursuits of more worth and utility.

At this time, too, the little Octavian fell sick, and for some time remained in so dangerous a way, that little hope was entertained of his recovery. Indifferent as Baldivia had affected to appear towards the child, he was not without painful apprehensions that death would snatch him from his hopes; and while he publicly condemned the marchioness for indulging his wish of being always in her arms, he secretly grudged the moments that she was necessitated to bestow on other objects. At length

the child began to recover, and it was considered proper to remove him from Potosi into purer air.

The earl of Avondale recommended Valambrosia, where he was born; but though Lorenza had married a young man she always preferred to Juan, and father Justin had placed them in the cabin on which Drucilla had so much set her heart, yet the old woman was far from satisfied, for instead of Lorenza having married the owner of the place, why, her husband was only a tenant, and obliged to work hard to pay the rent.

None of Drucilla's wishes ever prospered, and she declared herself an unfortunate creature; but when the chamber, once occupied by Aminta, was engaged for the nurse and Octavian, she protested the English lord was a fine-looking man, and the marchioness de Baldivia a beautiful creature, who deserved a better fortune than to be married to a man who ran after other women, and those not worthy to kiss the hem of her robe; she thought the

young marchioness even more unfortunate than herself.

Lorenza was half wild with joy, to think she should get, in one week, as much money as would pay the rent of the cabin and plantation for a year.

“Ay,” said Drucilla, “only see what odd things come to pass in this world; the making of this brat cost Aminta first her senses, and then her life; and not only hers, but it killed that kind-hearted soul Juan, into the bargain; if he had but lived long enough to marry you, Lorenza, and given you a right to his property, I should not have minded his being snatched away; but I am always unlucky; none of my wishes ever did, or ever will come to pass. Did not I wish that Fabian might never find his old he-goat, which he was hunting after all Friday last? and lo and behold, on Saturday morning, the first object he clapped his eyes on was the mischievous devil browsing before his door but, as I was saying, Lorenza, it is an ill wind that blows no one good; this little bastard Octavian seems not only born to

good fortune himself, but to bring luck to others ; well, well, better be born fortunate than rich."

"The child is not at all like Aminta," said Lorenza.

"No," replied the old woman, "he is like his wicked father, Basil says, for Basil has seen the marquis de Baldivia often enough, and a fine, tall, noble-looking man he says he is ; but handsome is as handsome does, you know, Lorenza ; and no one will pretend to say his ways are handsome, to tice away young girls, and first cheat them out of their virtue, and then make them run stark mad ; fie upon him ! and have such a beautiful young wife of his own ! but, as I was a-saying—what was I saying, Lorenza ?"

"Indeed, grandmother, I have forgot," replied she.

"Ay," resumed Drucilla, "that proves what attention you have been paying ; but what can people expect, who cast their pearls before swine."

"Why, bless me, grandmother," said

Lorenza, not much pleased with the illusion, "I am not a swine—am I?"

"There, I thought you would get out of temper," replied the old woman; "how often I have told you about that ugly temper of yours! bless me, it is very odd I should lose the thread of my discourse. Oh, now I have it! I was saying this boy Octavian is as like the marquis, his father, as one pea is to another."

"Very likely," said Lorenza.

"Ay, and it is very likely," resumed the old woman, "that when he is grown up a man, he will resemble him in his temper and actions."

"That will be a great pity, indeed," said Lorenza.

"Pity or no pity," continued the old woman, "those roguish eyes of his will delude the simple hearts of the women; but this is a matter we cannot help, you know; the gold he brings to your hand must not be refused."

"Refused!" repeated Lorenza; "no, truly, I must gather the harvest while the sun shines."

"That is a wise saying," returned Drucilla, "and worthy to be observed; that saying you learned of me, and I had it from my father, who brought it from the old world; I have been told he was the best cobbler in all Cordova. Did you tell Mathias to gather a plate of strawberries for the little marquis?"

"No," replied Lorenza, "I did not know they had been ordered; besides, strawberries are very scarce at this season."

"No matter for that," replied Drucilla, "they must be had; they are good for the child, it seems, and expence is not to be considered. What a pity it is the marchioness has no child of her own! I wonder," continued Drucilla, "how she can be so fond of this come-by-chance; it is a fine chance for him though. Did you look at his robes, all trimmed with rich lace? well, it is an old saying, that bastards have always more luck than honest-begotten children. I should not be surprised if this boy was to become a great lord too; at least, every thing must have a beginning; we all sprung from Adam,

and he was by trade a gardener; and all the kings and grandees in the world are of the same family."

"They would not be pleased to be told so," rejoined Lorenza.

"I suppose not," said the old woman, "for great folks dislike to hear the truth; but for all their pride, dust they are, and to dust they shall return."

The marquis, who seemed to take no interest in the child, was not consulted or informed of the necessity of removing him from the palace for change of air; but he was much pleased to find he was sent to Valambrosia, because he could there see him frequently, without drawing on himself particular observation, as his visits to a public plantation were not likely to be attributed to any motive beyond the wish of eating fruit newly gathered from the trees, while it yet retained its rich and inviting bloom; nor did any compunctious remembrances of Aminta rise to oppose his visits to the place that had been her home; she had been so easily won, that her well-

recollected pride and vanity seemed to absolve his soul from the sin of seduction.

Lorenza was short, very brown, and had little to recommend her face, except the freshness of youth; yet her simplicity had sufficient charms to engage the notice of the profligate Baldivia, who would have assailed her virtue, had not the continued presence and watchful care of Drucilla defeated his designs.

The pure air of Valambrosia soon restored the strength and bloom of the little Octavian, who now walked alone, and began to prattle his pleasures and wishes. Mathias, the husband of Lorenza, an honest clown, had taught the boy to call him father—a word the child was very fond of repeating.

One morning, being left with Drucilla, in the lower room of the cabin, he several times called father, upon which the old woman sagaciously observed—"The poor child does not know he has a grandee for his father; lean would be his luck, truly, if our Mathias had the breeding of him up; but the marquis de Baldivia has bush-

els of gold and silver; he is richer than all Peru besides; he is the man, by my faith, to have children, for he can afford to maintain them."

On raising her eyes, to her great consternation, the marquis de Baldivia stood before her. He frowned, and took no notice of the trembling Lorenza, who placed a seat for him—"Woman," said he, addressing Drucilla, "your speech is too free; whatever charity may induce me to do for Octavian, he belongs not to me—I am not his father."

"The saints know best," replied Drucilla, taking courage. "It is quite impossible for me to tell who is the boy's father; but I can safely swear his mother told father Justin that he belonged to you."

"And what credence was to be placed on her word," returned Baldivia; "his mother, unhappy creature, was mad."

"All that is very true," replied Drucilla; "the poor wretch was beside herself at times, sure enough, and talked in a very mad way about wearing silk robes, and gold, and pearls, and being deluded.

away, Heaven pardon her! and tricked out of her virtue by false promises; but before she died, she was as much in her senses as I am that stand before you in this place to tell it; and she swore, to father Justin and Juan, poor soul! who broke his heart through her misbehaviour, that the marquis de Baldivia was the father of her child, and, if I may be so bold as to speak my mind before a grandee, being but a poor, simple old woman, the boy, Heaven mark him with more grace than his sinful parents! is a noble, grand-looking child; and, to my thinking, the king of Spain, with all respect to his majesty, might be proud to own himself the father of such a son."

During the old woman's prate, Octavian had crept close to the marquis, and catching hold of his richly-embroidered cloak, innocently repeated the word *father*.

There are moments when the hardest hearts are alive to the feelings of nature. The marquis was touched—the word *father*, uttered by the unconscious babe, was an appeal to all that remained of huma-

nity in his perverted nature. He divided the rich curls that clustered on his beautiful forehead, and pressed his lips to his rosy cheek.

“Ay now, that is as it should be,” said Drucilla.

“Your comments can be spared,” returned the marquis; “I want not your advice to point out the proper or the just;” then turning to the child, who still held his cloak, he said—“Thy mother, boy, in the fever of insanity, fixed on me for thy father, and public opinion, ever prone to error, credits the assertion of madness; but — all this had passed unheeded, hadst thou not innocently created for thyself an interest in my bosom, by calling me father.”

“It is a wise child that knows its own father,” said the incorrigible Drucilla; “but I fancy little Octavian here has made no mistake, for I verily and truly believe—”

“What you believe, woman,” said the marquis, scornfully interrupting her, “is of no sort of consequence in the affair, nor does it matter to whom he owes his being. I, the marquis de Baldivia, adopt the boy,

and from this hour I expect him to be treated with the respect due to the son of a nobleman."

He then took the child by the hand, and, as he proudly left the cabin, ordered his nurse to remain within call; he then passed through the garden to the plantation, and led him to the seat under the great citron tree, where he had commenced the seduction of his mother, the unfortunate Aminta. Here the marquis examined the features of the child, and was pleased to find he bore no resemblance to the low-born peasant girl, and here he laid "the flattering unction to his soul," that, by adopting the boy, he had entirely expiated whatever sin attached to the betraying and deceiving his mother.

Engaged in caressing and listening to the artless prattle of Octavian, he observed not the approach of the marchioness, who, followed by father Velasco, entered the plantation. The child, on perceiving Rosaviva, struggled to quit the arms of the marquis, joyfully exclaiming—"Octavian's mother—good, pretty mother!"

The marquis appeared confused ; he was not pleased to be so caught ; he hastily placed the child on the turf, who flew to the embrace of the marchioness. His little arms fondly entwined her neck, while he offered his rosy mouth to her kiss.

The worthy Velasco again believed the reformation of Baldivia possible, and he freely expressed his pleasure at seeing him notice the child, as it gave the hope that he inclined to admit his claims.

“ Claims he has none, good father,” replied the marquis, “ except those which humanity allows the needy. It will however be gratifying to your piety, and the tenderness of the marchioness, to learn that though utterly disclaiming the assertion of his maniac mother, I have been induced, by pity for his orphan state, to follow her example.”

“ How, dearest Gonzalo, what have you done for this lovely child ?” asked the marchioness, with all the eagerness of joy.

“ I have adopted him,” replied Baldivia, “ and henceforth it is my will that Octavian shall be considered my son.”

The marchioness clasped the child to her bosom, warmly expressing her approbation; she then placed him in the arms of the marquis, whom he caressed with such playful sweetness and artless smiles, as made the profligate Baldivia sigh to remember his mother was the peasant-girl of Valambrosia.

“You must beware of this grandee,” said Drucilla to her granddaughter, as the sumptuous carriage of the marquis drove from the gate of the plantation.

“Why what is he to me?” asked Lorenza.

“The saints forbid he ever should be any thing to you!” returned Drucilla; “but I am wise; I can see plain enough which way the cat jumps. I have watched the glances of his wicked eyes, and find that he turns them upon you, Lorenza; but Heaven forbid that they should bewitch you as they did Aminta! You will have more grace, I trust, than to sell your virtue for silken robes, trimmed with golden pearls.”

“How odd you talk, grandmother!”

said Lorenza; "why the marquis never spoke an uncivil word to me in his life?"

"And if he did," said her husband, who had been listening at the door of the cabin, "I would break his bones, for all he is a grandee. Let him keep to his own wife, and let the goods of other men alone."

"Saint Mary be my guide!" returned the old woman, "are you turned lunatic, to talk so loud when you know who is above? Lorenza is too prudent to give ear to the marquis, if he wished to be wicked; but as to your talking about breaking the noble bones of a grandee, the saints defend us! why it is quite dangerous even to think of such a thing."

"Why who can know one's thoughts?" asked Mathias; "and I say, mother, the marquis thinks about my wife in an unlawful way, he deserves to have his bones broken."

The dispute between the old woman and Mathias might have grown high, but luckily he was called away, which gave Lorenza an opportunity of saying — "Bless me, why the temper of Mathias is

as hot as pepper! I am sorry he is so passionate, for perhaps, if I displease him, he will break my bones."

"Never fear, girl," replied Drucilla; "husbands are always to be managed; besides, I have a better opinion of Mathias; it is only cowards who beat women."

The earl of Avondale communicated to father Justin the adoption of the little Octavian by the marquis de Baldivia.

"It is just and proper," said the monk, "though I pity his virtuous, amiable wife, whom this child will continually remind of her husband's breach of his marriage vows."

"Would to Heaven they had never been plighted!" said the earl, "for never will Baldivia be reclaimed from his vices, and never can the virtuous Rosaviva be other than unhappy."

"Doubtless the marquis has much to answer," returned Justin; "but his reformation is not beyond the power of infinite grace. The marquis has sinned greatly, but he may deeply repent."

"Of that," replied the earl, "there is

but little prospect, holy father; and now I fear his gentle lady has heavy sorrows yet to suffer."

"May Heaven support her in her trials!" said Justin, fervently.

The grave of Juan was in sight; the earl of Avondale sighed as he stood beside it.—"In this narrow space," said he, "lie three of Baldivia's victims."

"Juan," replied the monk, wiping a tear away, "Juan was happy in not marrying Aminta; for with a mind so light and vain, she would not have fulfilled the duties of a wife."

"Yet Juan fondly loved her," returned Avondale.

"That was his misfortune," replied the monk; "but the mercy of Heaven prevented his love becoming his sin by separating them. He loved her to his own destroying; his heart was broken; he loved her to death."

The earl of Avondale parted with father Justin at the gate of his convent; and as he slowly trod the narrow path that wound down the mountain, he said—"Juan

happy, though he loved to death. He saw the object of his affections laid in the grave. He left her not to encounter afflictions when he was no longer near to protect her—he left her not united to vice—no, he saw her last breath quiver on her lips; his ear caught her last sigh; he saw her laid in her peaceful grave. Father Justin is right; Juan was happy, although his heart was broken—though he died the victim of villany and love.”

CHAPTER IV.

~~~~~

“Husbands, brothers,  
With dying ears, drank in the loud despair  
Of shrieking chastity.”

.....

“Be strong, my swelling heart!  
For I must ride upon the neck of danger,  
And plunge into a purpose big with death.  
'Tis but to die at last, and I will suffer  
Death's fiercest tortures to attain a great revenge.”

SINCE his return from the mines, Velasco silently and sorrowfully meditated on the



replies made to his arguments in favour of Christianity by Ozembo, and his heart acknowledged that the African's remarks were but too generally just, particularly those which pointed out the extreme difference between Christian precept and practice.—“And how,” said the holy man—“how is it possible to convince their understandings, in opposition to their suffering bodies and lacerated feelings?”

The earl of Avondale's mind was also occupied by the scenes he had witnessed in the mines. He execrated the wealth procured by the miseries, and at the expence of the lives of the Africans, and he formed a thousand benevolent, though visionary schemes to restore them to their lamented country.

The thoughts of the marchioness still wandered to the hut of Ozembo; her fancy dwelt on the elegant, graceful figure of Yarilla. Full of tender compassion, she resolved to exert all her influence with Baldivia in favour of his slaves; but to this little family, linked together not only by the ties of nature, but strong affection,

she determined to restore freedom, and provide the means for their return to Africa.—“Yes,” said Rosaviva, exulting in the prospect of performing a virtuous action, “yes, these interesting Africans, when reposing in the shade of their own spicy groves, shall acknowledge that all Spaniards are not oppressors.”

Full of her benevolent purpose, the marchioness seized the first moment of their being alone, to lay before her husband a pathetic, but strictly-just representation of the complicated miseries endured by his unhappy slaves.

The marquis, unmoved at the recital of the sufferings she had witnessed in her visit to the mines, diverted himself with pulling the shaggy ears of a favourite wolf dog till he yelled; but Rosaviva, though mortified at his apathy and inattention, continued, with all the artless energy of humanity, to plead the cause of his slaves. She entreated him to liberate the wretched sufferers, and restore them to their country—to the beloved relatives from whose bosoms they had been barbarously torn.

The marquis, with a derisive smile, called her a romantic, visionary enthusiast; declared her request savoured of insanity—"For how is it possible," said Baldivia, "that I can ascertain from what part of the vast continent, in which there are innumerable islands, so many Africans have been brought?"

"Endeavour to learn, dearest Gonzalo," resumed the marchioness; "reflect how acceptable such an act of mercy will be to Heaven, and the pleasure it will afford your own heart, to know that you have dried the tears of sorrow—that you have restored happiness to beings from whose bosoms it seemed banished for ever."

The marquis reflected only on the increase of wealth obtained by their labour, and that without slaves the silver mines of Potosi would be a useless possession. In reply therefore to the reiterated request of Rosaviva, that he would restore them their freedom, he argued that, being black, Nature, by stamping them of that disgusting complexion, had evidently marked her intention. Her forming hand had designed

them to be slaves to her more favoured children, in whose features, now suffused with bright carnation tints, then turning snowy white, as different emotions excited pleasing or painful feelings, could be read the certainty of an existing mind, alive to joy, to hope, to happiness, and misery.

“This expression of countenance,” continued the marquis, “being altogether denied to blacks, incontrovertibly proves them destitute of feeling more than the brute creation.”

Rosaviva felt shocked and indignant, while Baldivia proceeded to say—“And like other brutes, these Africans being deficient in reasoning faculties, denied by nature the higher powers of intellect, are fitted for the servile and laborious offices to which their strength is applied; and being in the grand chain of creation only one link above the horse and mule, they are, like them, to be tamed and broken into labour.”

The compassionating and intelligent marchioness wept as she listened to the fallacious and unfeeling arguments of her

husband—arguments she felt it her duty to refute. Finding he paused, she replied —“ We are taught by our navigators and historians, that Africa, which nature has lavishly embellished with fertile, rich, and beautiful productions, abounds in all the grand, sublime, and picturesque scenery, that the refinements of taste can estimate, or fastidious luxury enjoy.”

“ Yes, in this particular,” said the marquis, yawning indolently, as if weary of the subject, “ you are perfectly correct. Yes, Africa furnishes gold, ivory, slaves, ostrich feathers, gums, perfumes, and emeralds.”

“ Can then,” resumed Rosaviva, “ can a rational mind suppose it possible that the all-wise and beneficent Creator has so enriched and fertilized a land for the residence of brutes, to whom he has denied minds capable of enjoying or appreciating such abundant gifts, such numerous blessings? It were impiety to believe it. Oh no, Baldivia, though the simple and innocent Africans, content with the bountiful productions of their woods and fields, set no value on

the shining stones and glittering dross for which more enlightened nations murder their fellow-men, and desolate each other's provinces, think not their fruits are ripened, or their odorous flowers expand, unvalued or unadmired. The supposition that these sable people are without mind, and destitute of reflection, is erroneous. Their apprehensions are as clear, their susceptibility as keen, as ours; they are, as us, equally sensible of injury and kindness."

The marquis, with an incredulous air, shook his head, and exhibited symptoms of fatigue; but though convinced that he was tired of the subject, considering that another opportunity might not speedily occur of speaking in behalf of an injured and oppressed people, Rosaviva continued to say—"If the Africans have indeed no feeling, whence arises the sorrow so visibly impressed on the countenances of your slaves? Had they no minds, of course they would be spared the torments of memory—why then do they incessantly weep their separation from their country and their friends? Whence arises their resent-

ment of the violence or treachery that tore them from happiness—from their dear native land? whence their abhorrence of slavery?”

“You advocate their cause most eloquently,” replied the marquis, “yet in your zeal appear not to consider that by giving so many wretches freedom, you would more widely extend the circle of their misery. How could they return to Africa, a country so distant? how be preserved from the horrors of famine?”

The marchioness paused to consider these important points. The slaves were numerous, and but few of them could tell from what part of Africa they came.

Baldivia taking advantage of her hesitation, proceeded to ask—“How is silver to be obtained without slaves? how are the mines to be worked?”

“By free men,” answered Rosaviva; “restore them to liberty—remunerate the Africans for their labour—by this measure you will be a gainer every way. You will have the approval of Heaven on an act of virtue, and the thanks and blessings

of a grateful people, whose minds being rendered tranquil, their bodies would in consequence gain strength, and the work that is now languidly and unwillingly performed, would be pursued with alacrity. Aided by a cheerful spirit, the now-depressed African, whose thoughts revolve past happiness and present misery, would have a mind at ease, and the prospect of reward to stimulate his industry."

"A mind!" repeated the marquis, contemptuously; "instinct I grant they have in common with other brutes."

"You do not know them," answered Rosaviva; "you have never taken the trouble to examine their capacities, or to gain a knowledge of their intellectual powers."

"I know," returned the marquis, "that the Africans are a dull, stupid, ignorant race, incapable of gratitude, because destitute of mind."

"Be not," resumed the marchioness, "be not, dearest Gonzalo, thus obstinate in error; ask of the earl of Avondale—



question the good and venerable Velasco—he will tell you.”

“Of Velasco!” interrupted Baldivia; “ask of Velasco! the mania of converting them to Christianity has seized the pious monk; his imagination is inflamed by visionary projects, which never can, never will succeed. From him I should learn only the wild chimeras of his own inflated fancy.”

“Alas!” said the marchioness, raising her eyes, full of tender supplication, to the face of the obdurate Baldivia, “alas! are there no means to convince you that their Almighty Creator gave these wretched Africans feelings in common with other men, though their complexions differ?”

“Yes,” resumed the marquis, “I am convinced they have animal feelings; these I allow them; such feelings as Rolpho has,” pulling the ears of the wolf-dog till he howled with pain; “but for the higher faculties included in a comprehensive mind—on that point I shall for ever remain incredulous.”

“Go, then,” said Rosaviva, “explore the

depths of the mines yourself; the subject is surely worthy the trouble of inquiry and investigation. Converse with these unhappy slaves; hear from their own lips the mournful history of their griefs and sufferings. Go without delay, Gonzalo, and be convinced that hitherto you have been mistaken in the mind and character of the African."

"The weather," returned the marquis, throwing himself indolently on a couch, "the weather is so intolerably sultry, it precludes all exertion; the road to the mines is hilly and fatiguing."

"Yet, Gonzalo, sultry as the weather is, and fatiguing as is the labour of your slaves, they have no respite from the rising till the setting of the sun. They are compelled to toil," said the marchioness, "nor is the scanty food allotted them calculated to restore the strength exuding in streams from their wearied frames."

"Sprinkle the room with perfumed water," said the marquis to an attendant; "unclose the lattices and admit the air."

"Your unhappy slaves," resumed the

marchioness, "toil through the long, tedious hours of day in an unwholesome mine, where no free circulation of air can enter to refresh them."

"Your tender compassion, madam," replied Baldivia, "makes you forgetful that heat is natural to negroes; you do not seem to recollect that Africa is within the torrid zone. But no more of this uninteresting subject, I beseech you; I have before been sufficiently wearied by the visionary schemes and preachment of Velasco."

"Unfortunate Ozembo—gentle, suffering Yarilla," sighed the marchioness; "I hoped, if I could not succeed in restoring you to your country, at least to have given you freedom."

"And why," asked the marquis, "why, madam, are you so interested for these slaves, in particular?"

"Because," replied Rosaviva, "in person, manner, and intellect, they are far superior to the rest of the Africans. In Ozembo there is a lofty air, a dignity of mien, an elevation of sentiment, that speaks

him of superior understanding, as well as rank among his countrymen; while the beauty of Yarilla his wife, her grace, her softness, creates an interest in the heart, far better understood than described. Her brother Zoan too, so pensive, mild, and tender—oh, Gonzalo, had you seen this little family, had you beheld the kindness, the affection, that displayed itself in actions, not in words—yes, Gonzalo, had you visited their hut, you would have been, as I was, convinced that Africans, like us, have pride to wound, and sensibility to torture. Had you heard the answers made by Ozembo to the good Velasco on the subject of Christianity, you would have wept, as I did, their unhappy errors; you would have felt, as I do, the wish to give them liberty.”

The thoughts of the marquis contradicted the humane assertion, for he smiled as she added—“Incredulous as you are in respect of the intellects of these oppressed people, you must, in spite of all your prejudice, have been convinced that nature has gifted them with minds of no

common order; you would have felt compassion for their fate; yes, dearest Gonzalo, you would have said—‘I abhor the violence that tore you from your country; I disclaim every sordid advantage that may arise from the miseries of my fellow-men. Unhappy, injured Africans, return to your lamented country—you are free.’”

Baldivia affected to sleep; the marchioness saw his eyes were closed, and she ceased to urge the subject which had so deeply interested her benevolent heart. Baldivia had heard unmoved the recital of the sorrows and hardships of his wretched slaves, but the description the marchioness had given of the graces and beauty of Yarilla excited a curiosity in his mind, which he determined to gratify by inspecting the mines in person, where he had not been for some time.

Rosaviva believing him sunk in slumber, softly exclaimed—“Alas! how hard is the heart of this man towards others, while himself riots in affluence, and indulges in every luxury! Surrounded by

every earthly enjoyment, he neither feels for, nor remembers the privations nor necessities of his slaves. His couch is heaped with down, his spirits are refreshed with delicious viands, with generous wine, and exquisite perfumes. The present hour, Baldivia, is yours ; but hereafter there will, I fear, be awful reckoning. Yes, unhappy, suffering Africans, Heaven is just ; hereafter you will be avenged." The marchioness, disgusted and indignant, retired to weep, in the privacy of her own chamber, the hardness of her destiny, in being the wife of a man whose feelings and disposition were so little in unison with her own, whose gratifications were all selfish, and who obstinately steeled his heart against humanity.

"Well then," said the marquis, starting from the couch as Rosaviva left the apartment, "if I must not expect bliss in the world to come, let me enjoy the present hour, since its transient pleasures are all the saintly-minded marchioness allots me ; and if the jetty Yarilla indeed possesses the attractions my wife so liberally de-

scribes, she shall contribute to my fleeting joys."

He then gave orders to his people to be ready to attend him at an early hour the following morning.—"I will visit the mines," said the marquis; "I will interrogate and examine the slaves, and if this Yarilla has mind——Pshaw, folly! let the romantic enthusiast, Avondale, seek, in the society of woman, intellectual enjoyment—my wishes are more sensual."

At the evening repast the marquis, whose ideas were entirely occupied by the account the innocent Rosaviva had given of the graceful wife of Ozembo, himself took occasion to introduce the subject of the slaves, and to remark that he frequently met persons eager to offer advice which they were themselves averse to adopt; "for instance you—" addressing the marchioness—"I remember it is not long since the earl of Avondale purchased a female African."

"This is a fact I shall not attempt to deny," replied the earl.

"And how," asked Baldivia, trium-

phantly, "how does this agree with your doctrine? I have heard you express absolute abhorrence, utter condemnation, against such traffic."

"I am not hypocrite enough," said the earl, "to express what I do not feel; from my inmost soul I do abhor such traffic; and when I made the purchase you allude to, I was solely actuated by the wish to save an unfortunate creature from threatened ruin—to save her from becoming the property of a wretch, whose grey hairs I should have honoured, had I not discovered that he wished to purchase this wretched, defenceless girl for licentious purposes."

"And you," said the marquis, in a tone of irony, "you doubtless acted only from a virtuous impulse."

"I trust I did," replied Avondale calmly, and without noticing the sneer of Baldivia; "I rescued the unhappy creature from impending misery, and presented her simple and innocent to the marchioness."

What!" said the marquis, his dark eyes flashing exultation, "you, madam,



retain a slave about your person—you, whose theme is universal liberty, can this be possible, that your practice agrees so little with your precept?"

"No," replied Rosaviva; "my practice, Gonzalo, differs not from my precept; I have no slaves—I have given the female we are speaking of freedom; Heaven forbid that I should be served or obeyed by compulsion!"

"You have certainly acted very liberally," said the marquis, endeavouring to disguise his displeasure.

"Wisely, I trust," answered the marchioness; "for imitating the example of our pious friend Velasco, I have persuaded her to embrace the Christian faith; in compliment to you, Gonzalo, I have named her Isabella."

The marquis bowed, with all the fascinating grace peculiar to himself.

"But," continued Rosaviva, "in conformity with the dictates of my own conscience, I have made her a member of my own church."

The marquis threw a glance of inquiry

on Velasco, hoping and expecting to hear him severe in condemnation of the Protestant profession; but the good man understanding his thoughts, raised his eyes to heaven, and replied—"Every faith, I humbly trust, devoutly and sincerely followed, will be accepted by the Almighty and universal Father of mankind, and an act of piety and mercy, performed with the hope of his approval, will assuredly obtain favour, acceptance, and reward."

Rosaviva's lovely blue eyes filled with tears of gratitude and admiration as she listened to the monk's sentiments of universal charity, while the earl of Avondale, warmly pressing Velasco's hand, said—"Were all ministers of the Gospel of your liberal way of thinking, religious controversy and dissension would be no more, and all mankind would seek the road to heaven in friendship and in peace."

This was a conversation ill calculated to amuse the libertine mind of the marquis de Baldivia, whose thoughts were full of the interesting Yarilla, the graceful wife

of the sable Ozembo ; and wishing to gain a more particular description of her person, he took occasion to speak of a newly-discovered mine on his domain of Paluda.

The marchioness wished to say—" You will not surely work it—you have already too much wealth ;" but remembering her ill success in the morning, she remained silent, leaving it to father Velasco to represent the sin of coveting superfluous riches.

The good monk never lost an opportunity of pleading the cause of the oppressed Africans ; he spoke freely of their miseries, their general unhealthy appearance, which he asserted was the natural consequence of bad and scanty food, the extreme wretchedness of their habitations, from which light and air, the common benefits of nature, were excluded, and, worst of all, the barbarous tyranny of their task-masters, from whom they endured punishment, incessantly inflicted with inhuman cruelty on every age and sex, without attending to any plea of incapacity.

Baldivia, though unmoved by the sub-

ject, listened with unusual patience to the long and pathetic representations of his confessor, and hypocritically affecting to be touched with the distressful picture he had drawn of their inhuman oppressions, expressed a resolve to look into the abuses of the power placed in the hands of the inspectors of the slaves, who, it appeared, from accounts which had but lately met his ear, were absolute despots in the mines; he also promised to expedite the means of supplying the wretched creatures with more and better food.

“ I will not delegate this intention,” said the dissembling marquis to the pleased Velasco, “ but will, in person, examine into the grievances of these poor negroes, and will myself take measures to redress them.”

“ Such charity,” said Velasco, “ will expiate many offences—such merciful conduct will be pleasing in the eyes of Heaven.”

The earl of Avondale, who had for some time watched the countenance of the marquis, was the only person present who doubted the sincerity of his professions,

and the presentiment of an evil he could not define shot athwart his imagination; but the artless, virtuous Rosaviva, completely deceived by his specious manner, forgave the uneasiness his coldness in the morning had occasioned her, and fervently blessed his humane intention.

The marquis deceitfully pressed her hand to his lips, saying—"He trusted he should yet become the convert of her virtues."

Velasco, piously crossing himself, loudly pronounced—"Amen!"

Avondale felt a cold shuddering through his veins, while the marquis smiled, and exulting in their easy credulity, artfully led the innocent, unsuspecting Rosaviva to speak of Yarilla, on whose personal beauty and gentle manners she bestowed the warmest commendations. The earl of Avondale observed the eagerness with which Baldivia devoured the description of Yarilla's beauty; and wishing, if possible, to penetrate his real design, offered to be his companion to the mines on the following morning; but this proposal by no means suited the licentious schemes of

the marquis, who wished no censor, such as he knew the earl would be, on his actions; he therefore politely apologized to him for being, as he professed, compelled to decline what otherwise could not fail to give him infinite pleasure, alleging, in excuse, an indispensable business that would occupy him for a few days, but at the same time promising to go to the mines with his earliest convenience, when he would be proud to be honoured with the company of the earl of Avondale.

Delighted with the promise so solemnly given by the deceitful Baldivia, the marchioness retired, full of hope that she should yet see the emancipation of the Africans; and soon after the party separated for the night. Velasco, with his customary prayers, forgot not to thank Heaven for the grace of compassion bestowed on the marquis de Baldivia, and to humbly solicit from Almighty goodness his thorough reformation from vice and error.

The earl of Avondale was neither so easily imposed on, nor so sanguine in his hopes, as the pious, venerable monk. In

the wild flashing of Baldivia's eye, in the varied expression of his countenance, he plainly read the formation of designs in which virtue and compassion bore no part; he feared the visit of the marquis to the mines, instead of diminishing, would greatly add to the miseries of the oppressed Africans.

The marchioness retired to rest, with the hope that her husband's principles were not corrupt, and that his youthful errors being past, she should, in the meridian of his life, find him such as love had painted him, in the day when, expecting the future would be productive of happiness only, she had given him her hand, and with it a heart pure and glowing with a most true affection towards him, the selected of her choice.

Full of pleasing ideas, of schemes of benevolence, Rosaviva sunk into sleep, and her waking wishes hovered round her couch in dreams of peace and happiness. Not such the sleep of Baldivia; amidst the horrors that nightly surrounded him, in feverish dreams his thoughts dwelt on

Yarilla, and meditated the horrid design of tearing her from the arms of her husband, of forcing her from the mines, should her person, when seen, possess the attractions that now agitated his inflamed and vicious imagination.

At dawn of day he started from his couch, his limbs bathed in the dew of horror, yet his mind resolute to add to the perdition he knew he had already incurred; and while Lazarillo attended his toilet, he laughed at the ease with which, aided by a little sentimental cant, he had gulled his wife and the earl of Avondale—"Be theirs," said he, "the self-denying meed of virtue—the reward promised by dreaming monks to their proselytes after death, in that world 'from whose bourne no traveller returns' to tell us of his happiness! be it mine to grasp the voluptuous enjoyments of this life, where splendour and beauty offer me substantial, waking bliss! the happiness of this world be mine! for if Velasco rightly warns me, in the next my portion will be bitter."



Without informing any one in the palace whither he was going, attended only by Lazarillo and Sebastian, the marquis at an early hour of the morning arrived at the mines. The numerous slaves were already assembled, and at their labour; the weighty hammers sounded through the excavated entrance of the mines, as the males broke the silver in large flakes from the rocks, which the females collected in their baskets, and carried to the appointed receptacle.

The tall, majestic figure of Ozembo soon caught the eye of the marquis, and for the first time in his life his proud heart felt a sense of inferiority; the glance of his eye struck him with awe. Endeavouring to shake off what he considered a degrading emotion, he turned from Ozembo to examine the countenance of the more youthful Zoan; and in spite of the prejudice imbibed in his earliest days, and obstinately maintained through life, he saw in these men, though black, the strong and not-to-be-mistaken expression of superior mind, united with an air of dignity

that "would have graced a prouder fortune."

Displeased at the conviction he had not wished to meet, the marquis felt no compassion for the wretched Africans, who all, except the little family of Ozembo, appeared labouring under bodily disease, which rendered their incessant toil more afflictive. With hardened heart and haughty step he entered a square, excavated in the centre of the mine. Considering it a condescension beneath his rank and dignity to address the slaves himself, he ascended an elevation of rock, and commanded the chief inspector to convene the Africans; in the next instant the sound of the hammers ceased, and the miserable slaves were hurried to the presence of Baldivia; being by his order formed into a semicircle, the chief inspector informed them, that according to ancient usage, the marquis de Baldivia, their lord, by whom they were purchased, honoured them by his presence, and expected their homage.

The Africans gazed with horror on Baldivia, then turned a glance of sorrow on each other, but not a knee was bent. The

marquis imputed their conduct to obstinacy, and threw an enraged glance on the inspector, who, fearing for his own life, in loud and harsh tones commanded the slaves to kneel. Most of them obeyed the order, but Ozembo, addressing his wife and Zoan in their own language, forbade this servile acknowledgment of subjection—"Are we then voluntary slaves," said Ozembo; "if our minds really spurn the galling, the debasing yoke of slavery, why submit to kneel and pay homage to a tyrant whom our hearts detest? To aggrandize him our hapless country is depopulated; for him we are condemned to toil; by his command the lacerating whip degrades our wretched countrymen—by his inhuman order the torture is inflicted. Oh! if one spark of the indignant fire that blazes in my bosom animate the spirits of Yarilla and Zoan, as a husband, a brother, I entreat—nay, I command you both, bend not your knees to swell the pride of tyranny and foul oppression."

A murmur of approbation now rose among the slaves, who repeated to each

After the speech of Ozembo, severely condemning their own pusillanimous conduct. The inspector read dissatisfaction in their faces, and having also observed that the family of Ozembo stood proudly erect, while every other knee was bowed to the earth, he would have punished their contumacy on the spot; but the wary marquis, not choosing to irritate the Africans while he remained in the mines, affected to believe their non-compliance proceeded entirely from ignorant stupidity, and pretending compassion and mercy, forbade the application of the whip.

The slaves being dismissed and remanded to their labour, were ordered to pass slowly and singly before Baldivia, that he might, as he said, judge from their appearance of their state of health, but in reality that he might more attentively observe the ill-fated wife of Ozembo, the gentle Yarilla, who, in the dissolute fancy of the marquis, appeared to possess more fascinating beauty than the fairest European. The softness and mildness of her look, the modesty and pensiveness of her

deportment, raised no sentiment of compassion for her in his remorseless bosom which, exulting in the tyrannous power of effecting evil, had already sealed her destiny, and marked her for the victim of his inordinate passions.

The towering port and firm knit limb of Ozembo, together with the athletic figure of the more youthful Zoan, dwelt on the memory of the marquis de Baldivia; and from their indignation he expected tumult and disorder among the slaves when Yarilla should be missing; but being safe himself, and distant from their fury, he trusted to the inspectors to reduce them to order, and preserve tranquillity in the mines.

On his departure, near the mouth of the mine, the marquis unexpectedly encountered Ozembo, who stood with his arms folded, deep in thought. The chief inspector, who was attending to the instructions of his lord, sharply reproved the idleness of Ozembo, and bade him, unless he wished for punishment, hasten to complete his daily task.

Ozembo altered not his posture, nor appeared to listen to the insulting menace ; but casting on Baldivia a reproachful glance, he said, in his own language—  
“ Spirit of vengeance, these are white men !  
“ Coasters of the sable race ! How long shall  
“ Prostrate Africa be trampled on by these  
“ Insulting Christians, who preach of mercy,  
“ While their hands brandish over our devoted heads an iron scourge ?”

Baldivia, having resolved to torture him with the severest sufferings—to tear from him his heart’s cherished treasure, his beloved wife, dissembling mercy, forbade the inspector’s threatened punishment ; but feeling unable to endure the severity of Ozembo’s eye, he turned from him, but, with deep dissimulation, gave some orders in his hearing, respecting an amendment in the food of the slaves ; then, followed by the obsequious inspector, he quitted the mines, with no other sentiments than increased pride, from the consciousness of incalculable wealth—with no other intention than to perpetrate an act of brutal violence, exulting in the conviction that the persons and lives of the miserable

slaves, who laboured to supply him with every luxurious enjoyment, were at his uncontrolled disposal.

Ozembo saw the marquis depart, and his hatred followed him. He seized the implements of his labour, and, with Herculean stroke, splintered huge pieces of silver from the rock, exclaiming—"This is the white man's God! To this dross, which Africans despise, do Christians pay devoutest worship. This is the white man's day of power; but thou, Great Spirit! who dost behold the children of thy land despised, our colour stigmatized, and our necks galled with an accursed yoke—thou wilt avenge our cause—thou wilt yet allot a day when the pale Christian shall feel the vengeance of insulted Africa."

Zoan beheld the irritation of Ozembo's mind with apprehensive uneasiness. He feared lest his loud execrations, often uttered in the Spanish language, should draw on him the punishment of the whip—a degradation their little family had hitherto escaped, and which Zoan well knew would be attended with fatal consequences, as well to the inflictor as the receiver.

With more than usual pleasure, Zoan heard the evening bell sound their release from labour, hoping that rest and sleep would restore to Ozembo the composure which the presence of the marquis de Baldivia had so cruelly disturbed.

Ozembo, with the deep gloom of sadness on his brow, left the mine, while, as Zoan laid the implements of his toil aside, he said—"The fresh air will sooth the agitated spirits of Ozembo; the gentle voice of Yarilla will speak peace to his afflicted bosom."

But, alas! the hopes of Zoan were fallacious; the peace of their little family was that night to endure a mortal stab; the fates of Ozembo and Yarilla, woven in the darkest tissue, were that night involved in blood, and their peace was lost, to revive no more on this side heaven.

It had frequently happened, before this eventful period, that Yarilla, eager to quit the unwholesome mine, and breathe the cool air of the mountain, had hastened on, and reached their hut before her husband and brother, who sometimes lingered a few



minutes in conversation with their captive countrymen, listening to some affecting incident in their history, or relating their own. Ozembo, therefore, though he saw not Yarilla by his side when he left the mine, felt neither anxiety nor surprise at the circumstance, supposing that she had already reached their habitation, and was as usual, either employed in binding up the plants that grew round their hut, or in preparing their evening meal. But when they entered, and found their dwelling lonely—when they heard not the voice of her who at the close of each day of toil was accustomed to fly with melting tenderness to the embrace of her husband and brother, they gazed on each other with looks of wild apprehension.

Ozembo stood a statue of despair; the vague idea of what had in reality happened shot a sick tremor through his heart.

“I will seek her,” said Zoan; “perhaps Yarilla visits her friends in the neighbouring huts.”

He flew to inquire, while Ozembo, lea-

ing against the trunk of a tree which the lightning had split, himself as desolate as the leafless branches that, with melancholy motion, waved in the evening breeze; no hope revived his heart, and his trembling limbs refused to assist the search of Zoan, whose quick return informed him the hapless Yarilla was torn from his embrace for ever.

The monster Baldivia instantly glanced on the brain of Ozembo. Revenge boiled in his veins, and maddened his thoughts. He was satisfied that the tyrant, fired with her beauty, had forced her away.

“Yes,” said Ozembo, gnashing his teeth, in an agony of rage and sorrow, “yes, my tender Yarilla shrieks in the fangs of the remorseless tiger! my helpless one calls on Ozembo to save her from violation, for well do I know the chaste bosom of my Yarilla will nobly spurn the offered caresses of the white man; the wife of African Ozembo will despise Christian blandishments. Force, brutal force alone will contaminate the pure bosom of my beloved.”

ed. But I will fly to rescue or to revenge her."

Zoan placed in the hands of Ozembo a knife, which with infinite labour he had fashioned from the flinty rock. "The edge is keen," said Zoan.

"I will bury it deep in the heart of the accursed ravisher," replied Ozembo, as he concealed it in his bosom.

The passes from the mines were all strictly guarded, and it required no small degree of cunning to elude and escape the vigilance of the watch. This was however effected by the determined Ozembo, who resisted the earnest solicitations of Zoan to be the partner of his flight and vengeance.

On the neck of Zoan the intrepid Ozembo shed burning tears, but tearing himself from his embrace, he said—"Remain here, my brother; of Ozembo and Yarilla the thread of life is almost spun."

"And mine," replied Zoan, eagerly, "mine depends on yours—it is woven with it."

"True," replied Ozembo, regarding him with a look of affection, "most true, my

ther—thou must die also. But wait, charge thee; bear yet a little while thy offerings; wait the success of Ozembo—wait till thou hearest I have avenged the injuries of Yarilla—till I have dyed thy wife in the blood of the monster Baldivia. Then, beloved Zoan—brother of my heart, then if the dreadful fate of those you love light in thy bosom one spark of great revenge, let thy voice rouse and animate our languid countrymen. Bring to their minds our desolated groves, our kindred mourning for their captive sons—repeat the injuries of Yarilla and Ozembo—tell them of those who breathed their last agonized sigh beneath the tortures inflicted by the white man's tyranny—remind them of the groans and blood of the devoted Africans, extorted and wantonly shed by Christians—oh, if this representation fail to rouse them to revenge, let thine own hand speed thee on the way to join the franchised spirits of Yarilla, of Roseb and Ozembo!”

“I will not fail to act thy bidding,” said Zoan, wringing Ozembo's hand;

“ the flame of vengeance is not extinct—it blazes fiercely in my bosom. Before the torpor of death chills my voice and benumbs my arm, Zoan, my brother, shall effect thy wish. Farewell for ever, Ozembo! in this world it seems likely we shall meet no more; but rest thee firm in the assurance, the undaunted spirit of an African breathes in Zoan.”

His straining eye followed the swift-retreating form of Ozembo through the gloom of the night, faintly illumined by a waning moon, whose pale light quivered on the topmost peak of the mountain.

“ Farewell, Ozembo, my brother, my friend!” said Zoan; “ in this bad world most probably we meet no more. God of the Africans, direct his steel! let it be dyed deep in the blood of the savage white man!”

Zoan retired to the hut; he threw his toil-fatigued body on the leaves that had formed the couch of Yarilla, on whose fate, yet hid in obscurity, he dwelt with agony. The scenes of his happy youth, the spacious bower of king Mambuca his father, the gay dances in which he had

joined in the aromatic groves of Africa, then recurred to his memory, and his fancy hung with melting tenderness on Ora, the dear inspirer of his early love; he recollected the hardy exercises and pleasures of his former days, when he followed the chase on the precipitous summits, and among the dangerous passes, of the Sierra Leone, in whose rugged clefts he tore from the back of the brindled panther, or the spotted leopard, whom his courage had vanquished, their rich and furry skins, or collected the bright plumage of the screaming heron, to decorate the jetty forehead of the maid his heart approved, who waited for him at the balmy hour of evening, to receive and exchange the vow of love. A separation from his native land—the annihilation of his fondly-cherished hopes, effected by the barbarity of white men, had been sufficient cause for mortal hatred, and powerful incitement to revenge; but again a new and more terrible injury was sustained, and all the fierce and malignant passions of Zoan's soul boiled in tumultuous fury, urging great

and signal vengeance on the accursed white men, the savage oppressors of his race.

“ Yes,” said Zoan, starting from his recumbent posture, where sleep had refused to seal his weary eyes, “ yes, my sister, my friend, Zoan will nerve his arm with the remembrance of your injuries.”

As yet the stars had not faded from the sky ; all was still, and he heard the guard at the mines relieved. “ Ozembo, long before this,” said Zoan, “ has passed in safety. He hastens to the work of vengeance. Yes, inhuman white men,” continued he, sharpening his knife against the rock, “ the time arrives when the trampled African awakes. Terrible in wrongs, he seeks revenge—demands the blood of all his slaughtered countrymen. The hour approaches when the iron yoke your cruelty imposes shall gall our necks no more, but death or freedom be achieved at once.”

Zoan threw himself on the bench under the weeping birch, and recalled the dream of Yarilla in the cave of the Niger.

“ Thy dream, my tender Yarilla, is ac-

accomplished," said Zoan; "thou art in the fangs of the monster; he wounds thy bosom; but Ozembo will avenge the wrongs of his beloved."

The deep-toned bell, at the usual hour of early morning, assembled the slaves to their labour in the mines. Zoan went among the rest, not to pursue his customary toil, but to fulfil his promise pledged to Ozembo at their parting, to rouse his countrymen to great revenge. The inspector, whose business it was to call over the names of the slaves, found Ozembo wanting, and insolently demanded of Zoan why he was absent?

"Ask you that of me?" replied Zoan, heaving with stifled rage; "know you no cause should make Ozembo absent himself from this detested place? nay, Christian, give your insatiate fury scope; let the lash fall on this devoted frame; the injured Ozembo never will return; he seeks his violated wife."

"What! has the slave fled?" asked the inspector, in evident trepidation; "the



guard shall answer for his escape. Let the slave be pursued—waste not a moment,” said he, issuing his orders to the attendant Spaniards; “if the fugitive slave be not brought back, it will be at the peril of your own lives.”

“When the savage tyrant,” said Zoan, “whom you denominate your lord, restores his wife uninjured to his arms, then will Ozembo return to labour in these abhorred mines.”

The inspector beheld the glaring eye and muscular arm of Zoan (which seizing the massive hammer with which he broke the silver from the rock, swung it with indignant action round his head), and seized with terror, he hastily retreated towards the entrance of the mine, loudly exclaiming to the captains of the guard, that during the night, a slave had escaped, and commanding them to find out and imprison the men who had negligently or wilfully permitted him to pass.

Instantly the sound of labour was suspended in the mines; the disappearing of Yarilla the preceding evening, and the

subsequent flight of Ozembo, were instantly known to all the slaves, who eagerly crowded round the afflicted Zoan, to learn from his mouth a confirmation of what to them appeared not only incredible, but impossible, that Yarilla had been carried off, and Ozembo, spite of the precaution used by their tyrants, had contrived to pass the guarded boundaries.

In vain the inspectors exerted their authority to disperse the slaves, and fix them to their accustomed tasks; all were unanimous in refusing obedience to their taskmasters, and in declaring they would toil no more till the fate of Ozembo was ascertained. The inspectors, as a last expedient to terrify them into subjection, commanded the various engines of torture to be displayed; but the spirit of resistance had taken possession of the hitherto-timid Africans, and they boldly pronounced a resolution to perish to a man, rather than pursue their wonted labour, while unacquainted with what had befallen Ozembo and Yarilla.

The number of the slaves more than trebled the Spaniards, and the inspectors feared to add to their present irritation by attempting punishment; all that remained for them in their present disagreeable and dangerous situation, was to dispatch immediate intelligence to the marquis de Baldivia of the flight of Ozembo, and the revolting disposition of the slaves—to request orders respecting Zoan, whose rebellious manner and inflammatory speeches had already created discontent and tumult in the mines, with the entire stop of labour in every department, the slaves arming themselves with offensive weapons, and seeming bent on some desperate course, perhaps to fall upon the Spaniards, who were too few in number to oppose their intentions, or to hope to subdue them by force of arms.

On the arrival of the messenger, dispatched from the mines at Potosi, he learned that the marquis was absent, and that it was not known to any one in the palace whither he was gone. The messenger, breathless with speed and agitation, related

to Velasco and the earl of Avondale the events of the preceding night, and the state of fearful commotion in which he had left the mines, where the Africans were breathing vengeance against the Spaniards.

The disappearing of Yarilla explained the designs of the marquis; and while Velasco stood irresolute what course to pursue, the indignant Avondale gave strict charge to the attendants to keep the marchioness ignorant of her husband's atrocity and baseness. Having advised with Velasco, the earl determined to seek Baldivia at Paluda, that palace being known to be the scene of his dissolute pleasures—"Perhaps," said the generous Avondale, "I may arrive in time to prevent the commission of a brutal act; I may prevail on the marquis to restore Yarilla to her afflicted husband."

"And oh!" replied Velasco, tears running down his venerable face, "virtuous young man, your life may be the forfeit of your generous interference."

"The will of Heaven be done," replied the earl; "if I fall, it will be in defence

of oppressed and injured innocence; and what better passport, good father, can I have to the realms of bliss?"

Velasco wrung his hand, and as he repeated farewell, he felt it was for ever.

The earl, with two chosen servants, Englishmen, set off for Paluda, while the deeply-afflicted Velasco saw, in this base and cruel act of the marquis, a fresh impediment thrown in the way of Ozembo's conversion to Christianity; and with his aged bosom oppressed by grief, he returned with the messenger to the mines, though flattering himself that his reproof and persuasions would calm the threatened insurrection, and, without being necessitated to adopt severer measures, restore tranquillity to the irritated minds of the slaves, who, infuriated by their own sufferings, and inflamed by Zoan, might, if not timely soothed, spread blood and desolation into the heart of the country.

The unfortunate wife of Ozembo, answering too well the description given of her by Rosaviva and the earl of Avondale, appeared lovely and attractive in the eyes

of the unprincipled marquis de Baldivia, who, before he quitted the mines, had given his orders respecting the devoted Yarilla; and pursuant to his diabolic design, the artless victim was appointed a task far from her husband and the rest of the slaves, near the mouth of the mine.

The ill-fated Yarilla had scarce time to wonder and lament being obliged to remain at such a distance from her husband and her brother, when she was suddenly seized by two of Baldivia's wicked agents, who, to prevent her shrieks being heard in the interior of the mine, drew a covering tightly across her mouth, and bearing her in their arms, conveyed her from the mines, to a carriage which was waiting near the foot of the mountain, into which, spite of her utmost resistance, she was placed; and in a few moments the wretched Yarilla was whirled far from the protecting arms of Ozembo and Zoan.

The carriage made no stop till it arrived at the magnificent palace of Paluda, which was situated in the bosom of groves of palm and plantations of orange and citron,

where cooling fountains, marble pavilions, and golden-latticed bowers, invited to repose and voluptuous indulgence. Here, though surrounded with all the luxurious magnificence that art could invent, or unbounded wealth supply, Yarilla, regardless of splendour, wept in anguish, and called with ceaseless cries on her husband and brother, those beloved ones for whose absence the united riches of the world could not console her. By the orders of the marquis, the despairing Yarilla was conducted to a perfumed bath; the coarse habit of a slave was cast aside, and her slim, graceful form arrayed in all the pomp of eastern splendour.

To the anxious interrogations of the devoted victim the well-instructed menials gave doubtful answers, or pretended utter ignorance of the intent for which she was brought thither, and for some hours the innocent mourner knew not the dreadful extent of her afflictions; and though her eyes rained showers of tears in being thus cruelly separated from the beloved partners of her heart, yet her thoughts glanced

not on the horrid purpose for which she had been dragged from the mines, for the gloom and labour of which she would gladly have exchanged her present splendid habitation, for there she heard the voices, and saw the beloved forms of Ozembo and Zoan.

As the superb mirrors which adorned her apartment reflected her dazzling appearance, Yarilla earnestly entreated to be clothed again in the slave's habit, and sent back to the mines, to participate the toils of her husband—"For well," said she, "too well I know, by my own agonized feelings, what the bosom of Ozembo will endure in this cruel separation; the tender affection of Yarilla was all that reconciled him to life—that enabled him to bear the hardships and degradations of slavery. Oh, barbarous white men! place yourselves in his situation, ask your hearts how they would bear to have beloved wives torn from them. Mock not my affliction—deride not my tears—but if you have mercy in your natures, restore me to Ozembo!"

The attendants remembered the beha-



viour of Aminta, and contrasted it with the anguish of Yarilla.

“Aminta came willingly, you know,” said Fernandez; “this poor soul has been brought by force. I wish, though, I was at Lima, for I never liked to see a woman’s tears; and I am afraid, when the marquis arrives, there will be terrible work. I am sorry Gabriel ran away from Paluda, as I am certain his place, to which I am promoted, will not suit me.”

“I suppose,” replied Isadore, “Aminta and Gabriel are together, married perhaps, for all she was a little crack-brained or so.”

Fernandez shook his head.

“There will be a fine raving and storming,” continued Isadore, “when the marquis learns that Gabriel has run away, unless this black beauty makes herself agreeable, and keeps him in good humour.”

“Of that,” replied Fernandez, “there is but little hope; poor creature! I pity her from my heart; and between ourselves, Isadore, I foresee such tumult at Paluda

as makes me envy the situation of Gabriel, be he where he may."

The newly-discovered mine on the domain of Paluda was near the watch-turret from which Aminta made her escape, and having fatigued himself with surveying the rocks which he had ordered to be blown up, to make a road from the mine to the palace, the marquis de Baldivia entered the watch-turret to wait the appearance of Lazarillo and Sebastian, whom he had ordered to lead his horse to that station. As he ascended the spiral stairs, he thought of the peasant-girl of Valambrosia, but the remembrance of her madness and death did not deter him from proceeding to the last chamber, which gave a view of the road on which he expected his people. An horrible stench here assailed his nose, and, as he threw open the door, he beheld the body of Gabriel, suspended from a hook, high in the wall, to which he had hung himself with an embroidered zone, that had, in her day of error, encircled the waist of Aminta.

Baldivia started back as this dreadful

object met his view, for the eyes of the wretched man, strained from their sockets by the convulsive pangs of death, seemed fixed on him in horrible gaze. On the table lay a paper, which the marquis almost unconsciously seized. It was addressed to himself, and contained only the following words—"Baldivia, destroyer, behold thy work!"

"Fool! liar! coward!" exclaimed the marquis, crushing the paper beneath his hand, "I did not bid thee put an end to thy existence!" yet while he spoke, conscience reproved the assertion, and he fancied a voice sounded in his ear—"Thou art a murderer!"

Unable to overcome the terrors that crowded his brain, he waited not the return of his attendants, but, hastening from the watch-turret, gained the palace on foot.

The arrival of the marquis de Baldivia, of which she was informed by the female attendant, Minaretta, disclosed at once to the miserable Yarilla the detestable design for which her person was adorned; but the abhorrence of her soul had no time for

utterance. Before her lips could pronounce her feelings, Baldivia stood before her.

Yarilla shrieked at his presence, and attempted to fly, but, seizing her hand, he said—"Remain, Yarilla; thy lord is enamoured of thy beauty, and releases thy soft form from the drudgery of the mines, that here, surrounded by luxury, in this region of magnificence and delight, thou mayest contribute to his pleasures."

Yarilla wept bitterly, and ineffectually struggled as the fevered hand of Baldivia grasped hers—as his licentious gaze wandered with undaunted boldness over her person.

"Look on me, Yarilla," said the marquis; "why thus avert thine eyes, and sully their lustre with unavailing tears? Look on the marquis de Baldivia, who condescends to treat thee as an equal, wooing thee with tender speech to bless his wishes. I am thy lord," continued he, "and might command obedience to my will; but I would rather owe to inclination than compulsion the possession of thy person. Be not thou perverse; constrain me not to recollect thou art my slave, but

meet my love with smiles and soft compliance."

Yarilla sunk from his enfolding arms upon her knees.—"Ozembo," said she; piteously, "Ozembo—I am his wife; restore me to his arms; I live but for Ozembo."

"You are my purchased slave," resumed Baldivia, sternly, "and live but while I please. Quick, dry thy tears—they are offensive to me. Deck thy face with gladness, let thy lips wear those sweet enchanting smiles thou didst bestow within the mines upon Ozembo."

The tears of Yarilla gushed out afresh at the mention of that beloved name, while Baldivia, enraged to find she preferred Ozembo to himself, loudly demanded—"Know you not you are my slave?"

"Alas! too well," returned Yarilla, "for I can never cease to remember the dear-loved shores of Africa, where your barbarous countrymen destroyed our canoe, and made my husband, my brother, and myself, your prisoners. But if I am your slave, why degrade your high dig-

nity by condescending to notice one so very much beneath you? Return me, slave as you have made me, to Potosi's dismal mines; suffer me again to share my husband's and my brother's chains and toils."

"Unworthy and ungrateful as thou art," returned the marquis, "thou hast inspired a flame fierce and uncontrollable in my bosom. Deform thy face no more with tears—dim not thy eyes mild lustre with unavailing grief—forget the slave Ozembo—meet thou my wishes with compliant kindness, and thou shalt reign the empress of my heart."

The arms of Yarilla were folded on her bosom; her streaming eyes were bent upon the ground. Baldivia, provoked at her silence, sternly reproved her sorrow.—"Look round," said he, "let thine eyes behold the splendour that waits on every side to woo thy approbation. The costly looms of Persia deck thy form, the richest perfumes of Arabia breathe around thee, and on thy brow glisten the radiant diamonds of Golconda's mine. Will not the

entrancing melody of music, the sumptuous banquet, and the velvet couch, united with my ardent love, my fond caresses, banish the slave Ozembo from thy thoughts?"

"Never," replied Yarilla, firmly, "oh never! Ozembo is my nightly dream, my morning hope, my all of consolation, since your barbarous countrymen murdered my smiling babe, my innocent Roseb, before my eyes, and tore me shrieking from my native land. Ozembo is my lord, my friend, the husband of my heart."

Baldivia's eyes sparkled with fury, while his voice, loud and harsh, exclaimed—"Woman, forbear! urge my rage no further! peace, as you value life!"

"Life!" repeated Yarilla, with a hopeless smile, "alas! to me life is no longer valuable; I have no wish save instantly to die, since torn from him for whose dear sake I have endured in this detested country a wretched being. Oh," continued she, sighing heavily, "what charms can life present to me?"

"Survey the splendid decorations of

this palace," said the marquis, "where art and genius, with inventive skill, have given to painting and to sculpture all but breath and motion. Explore the groves beneath whose aromatic shade the marble fountain pours its silver stream, inviting with its tinkling murmurs sweet repose. There, at the balmy hour of evening, when twilight steals upon the closing flowers, or when the moon sheds her soft lustre on the scene, in the temple, or the bower, I will await your coming, no more your lord, but your adoring lover. Music and wine shall also lend their powers, and while you listen to the voice of blended harmony and love, then you shall own that life has charms, and it is wisdom to enjoy them."

Baldivia's arms again enfolded the shrinking form of Yarilla. He bade her forget the melancholy past. "The present hour," said he, "is pregnant only with delight. In my arms begin a new life of happiness and love."

"Never!" exclaimed Yarilla, recoiling from his embrace, "oh never! Such a



union were most preposterous. Nature's self has marked a line of separation between an African and Spaniard. Tinging their skins of such a different hue was uttering a positive command that they should never marry with each other, but still remain a separate race. My heart joys not in costly gifts, for I am not a Christian to worship gold and glittering stones; my ear delights not in your flatteries. Restore me to my husband—to Ozembo—Never can the thoughts of Yarilla forge the chosen object of her early love. O no! Ozembo's truth, his tenderness, his valour, are impressed with everlasting seal upon my heart. Hence with these gaudy trappings!" continued she, tearing the sparkling jewels from her arms and bosom; "these glittering baubles bear no value in my eyes, that look in vain for him—my husband, to me the richest treasure that the world affords. Dear, native Africa," said Yarilla, clasping her hands, on which her tears fell like rain, "dear, native Africa, my husband, my child, my kindred, and my friends—these were the wealth I

prized. Alas ! yes ; one simple flower gathered on the Amber island, and presented by the loved hand of my Ozembo, was richer in my sight, more estimated by my feelings, than all the splendour of Peruvian wealth."

Baldivia stood amazed ; rage and disappointment hung darkly on his frowning brow. It was now from a slave, an uninstructed African, he met the first opposition to his wishes. The unhappy females whose fate it had been to be selected from the mines for his licentious pleasures, fear or vanity had rendered easy victims ; but the wife of Ozembo unshrinkingly expressed abhorrence, despised his splendid presents, repressed with virtuous scorn his freedoms, and made his callous mind confess that Africans have minds endued with sensibility, and swayed by just sentiments of good and evil.

The passions of the marquis, never subject to the control of reason, ever accustomed to meet submission to his will, became infuriate at the resistance of Yárilla, who, with all her strength, opposed his wishes,

till, wrought to savage wildness, he commanded she should be divested of the rich attire in which she had been most unwillingly arrayed, and her bold opposition to his will, her daring contumacy, chastised; the brutal Baldivia ordered the lash to be exercised on the soft, fragile form he had but a few minutes before, with all the glowing rhetoric of passion, wooed to his embrace.

The vaulted dome echoed the strokes of barbarity inflicted by savage tyranny. The shrieks of Yarilla sounded through the marble hall, while the monster Baldivia stood by, and cruelly urged the agent of his villany to rear the bloody thongs over her quivering frame, demanding between each lacerating stroke whether she would yet yield compliance with his brutal wishes; but, though writhing with agony, Yarilla firmly persisted in the virtuous resolution of preserving her person inviolate.

Again the whip descended on her with severer force. The distracted, suffering Yarilla called in vain on her husband and brother, till, unable longer to support the

tortures enforced by the inhuman Baldivia, she fainted. The pitiless monster then ordered her to be borne to the bath, and styptic essences to be applied to her bruised and wounded shoulders; and while yet unable to resist his violence, the virtuous, miserable, devoted Yarilla became the victim of remorseless villany—the last prey of the destroyer Baldivia.

## CHAPTER V.



A cause like ours is its own sacrament;  
 Truth, justice, reason, love, and liberty.  
 Th' eternal links that clasp the world are in it,  
 And he who breaks their sanction merits chains,

.....

Arise, thou son!

Haste, haste to rouse thee at the call of liberty,  
 That shall once more salute thy morning beam,  
 And hail thee at thy setting. *Gustavus Vasa.*

It was the close of evening when Ozembo entered the long avenue of flowering alocs that led to the magnificent retirement of Paluda, the scenes of the marquis

de Baldivia's licentious pleasures and savage cruelties.

"Here," said Ozembo, "in these polluted shades the brutal ravisher confines my tender Yarilla. Take comfort, my beloved, thy husband will avenge each tear extorted from thine eyes. Yes," continued he, gliding beneath the deep shadow of the trees, "yes, my Yarilla, Ozembo comes to rescue and avenge thee."

The avenue branched off on each side the magnificent marble portico that ornamented the front of the palace, into groves of intermingled palm, orange, and citron.

"Such," said Ozembo, as the soft breeze of evening wafted round his drooping head the fragrance of the blossoms, "such sweets were wont to greet my senses in the peaceful grove that surrounded my home in the bosom of the Amber island, when happiness, in the smiling form of Yarilla, reposed in my arms, and brightened my hours."

While he spoke, a groan, as of one in pain, struck his ear. He paused and listened; his own name, repeated in faint

accents, impelled his eager glances on every side the grove. Another and a deeper groan directed his steps to the spot where, extended on the turf, weak, faint, and apparently dying, the form of Yarilla met his distracted sight.

“Ozembo,” exclaimed the mourner, as he hung over her, unable to speak the contending emotions of his soul, “beloved Ozembo, art thou here?”

“To rescue thee,” replied Ozembo, raising her from the earth, “to rescue or perish with thee. Grow to thy husband’s doting heart, my Yarilla—that heart which throbs to avenge thy sufferings. Why dost thou weep and shrink from my embrace?”

“Oh, never more,” said Yarilla, “shall I repose upon thy bosom. Avoid me, Ozembo; swiftly bend thy footsteps from this horrid place; fly, or the murderous tyrant will destroy thee. My eyes are blest in this last tender look; haste thee hence, Ozembo, and let me die.”

Again she sunk upon the earth. Ozembo kneeling beside her, in tones of anguish,

said—"I have journeyed hither, despising peril, braving pain and hunger, to live or die with thee, my Yarilla. Why dost thou avoid my arms that long to clasp thee? why dost thou fix upon my face that sad, despairing look?"

Yarilla's eyes were fixed upon her husband with an expression of unutterable woe.—"Alas! Ozembo," said she, endeavouring to raise herself, "there is a fatal cause. Canst thou not guess for what accursed purpose I was dragged from the mines?"

Ozembo's eyes shot fire; his bosom heaved convulsively, while, gnashing his teeth, he uttered—"May the God of the Christians guide my weapon to his black heart! Baldivia, tremble! thy hours are numbered."

Yarilla, supporting her weak frame against the trunk of a tree, threw aside the veil that covered her lacerated and yet bleeding shoulders.—"Behold, Ozembo!" said she; "see what Baldivia's cruel mandate has inflicted! see what the merciless whip has done!"

Ozembo gazed in horror, while his eyesained tears of agonizing pity.—“Think that I have suffered,” resumed Yarilla, to preserve my person thine; but even the punishment of the lash sufficed not; my shrieks, my tears, my resistance, were of no avail; the inhuman tyrant barbarously triumphed, and never more shall his polluted form be folded in thy faithful arms. I would have gladly died before his shame had reached me, but, alas! it might not be. Hate me not, Ozembo! It will soon be over with the debased, the miserable Yarilla; my pulses soon will cease to beat; the memory of slavery and disgrace will sink in deep oblivion; the bill dews of fast-approaching death hang on my forehead. Ozembo, beloved Ozembo, thou and my brother——”

The last moments of the wretched Yarilla were at hand—she reeled, and sunk in the supporting arm of her husband, who, in distracting grief, kissed the deep ashes made by the pitiless whip, repeating, in a voice suffocated with tears—



“ My Yarilla ! my own Yarilla ! we will die together.”

“ No,” replied she, “ not so, Ozembo ! thy bleeding country—thy Yarilla’s wrongs, demand the vengeance of thine arm. When I am dead, Zoan and——”

Her faltering tongue refused to complete the sentence, but a brilliant stream of light flashed from her dying eyes, as she wrung his hand with convulsive grasp.

“ Yes,” said Ozembo, “ yes, my murdered love ! I understand thee, and to fulfil thy wish will I bear awhile the misery of life. This arm shall avenge the wrongs of Ozembo and Yarilla. Tremble, Baldivia ! thy hour approaches ! never more shall the rising sun light thee to act thy cruelties, for ere he pass the eastern gate, my vengeance shall be glutted with thy blood. Infernal tyrant ! if there is a hell, as Christians teach, to that hell Ozembo’s arm will soon dispatch thee.”

“ See,” said Yarilla, pointing upwards, “ see that silver cloud ; my Roseb rests upon it. Ozembo, my husband, I faint—I die. Beloved Ozembo, I go to Roseb.

See, he smiles and beckons me. Hasten thou to join us in the abodes of peace. My child, my Roseb, fade not from my sight! thy hapless mother follows thee! Ozembo—Zoan—farewell!”

The ill-fated Yarilla sunk from the powerless arm of Ozembo; a long-drawn sigh murmured from her icy lips, and with it her pure soul fled from its earthly mansion. Ozembo gazed for a moment on the form of her so loved; then starting from the earth, he dashed the tears of tender sorrow away with indignant action.

“Blood,” said he, “the black, polluted stream that feeds Baldivia’s heart, shall weep thy death, my Yarilla. Farewell awhile, beloved one! our separation will be short; Ozembo will not mourn thee with another tear. Oh no! Ozembo’s eyes will rain no more sorrow on thy senseless clay; his spirit joys that thou art past the sense of suffering. A few short hours, and we shall meet again. Yes, my beloved, we shall again unite, and dwell in never-ending bliss upon a

shore where no white men tyrannize—no torturing lash is felt.”

Ozembo bent over the breathless form of Yarilla to catch a last look. He kissed her pale lips, drew the blood-stained veil over her face, and grasping tightly the knife placed in his hand by Zoan, he rushed forward with frantic gesture, exclaiming, as he flew along the grove, now darkened by the gloom of night—“Baldivia! monster! ravisher! Ozembo comes! prepare to meet his vengeance!”

Wandering through a maze of thickly-planted trees, his feet were bewildered, till a distant light presented an imperfect view of a building. Thither Ozembo hastened; a flight of marble steps stood before him, the graceful entrance to a temple of light and fanciful construction, supported by Corinthian pillars, round whose polished shafts flowers of every scent and hue were tastefully entwined, proudly glowing and rearing their bright, odorous blossoms beneath the radiance streaming from numerous lamps, artfully arranged to display the voluptuous magnificence of the interior,

where, on a couch, richly embossed with figures of massy gold, and splendidly canopied with draperies of imperial purple velvet, lay the marquis de Baldivia; his eyes were closed, and his senses locked in the deep trance of sleep.

Ozembo approached with noiseless step, and drawing the shining blade from his bosom, reared it with determined arm over his remorseless foe, as he prepared to strike the weapon to his heart. He beheld the cheek of Baldivia flushed, his brow hung with large drops of perspiration, his countenance distorted, and his limbs tossing in agitation.

“The sleep of guilt,” said Ozembo, “is nor tranquil nor refreshing. Shapes of horror fill the tyrant’s dreams. Even now the bleeding form of Yarilla appals his shuddering view—his terrified imagination hears her cry for vengeance on her murderer. I would not stab thee in thy dreams; no, I would view thy waking horrors, glut my ears with thy despairing groans, and, pitiless, deride the coward pleadings of thy abject spirit, anxious for

life. Awake, Baldivia! tyrant! robber! ravisher! awake! behold thy mortal enemy! between thee and a dreadful death hangs but a little space. Baldivia, awake! Ozembo calls."

Baldivia started; his glaring eyes wandered around him for a moment, then settled on the glittering knife, whose sharp point was directed to his breast by the brandished arm of Ozembo. Fear begets devotion. Baldivia had forsook and was forsaken by every divine influence, yet "Defend me, Heaven!" murmured from his impious lips, as he beheld the stern, determined countenance of Ozembo.

"Darest thou ask protection of thy God?" demanded the African; "presumest thou upon his mercy—thou whose monstrous deeds have set at nought his power, and bade defiance to his laws? If the white man's God be, as you teach, righteous and just, he will be deaf to thy entreaties, as thou, insatiate tyrant, hast been to Yarilla's."

The fingers of Ozembo grasped the throat of the marquis, who struggled in

vain to relax his hold, while, in tones scarcely articulate, he demanded—"Slave, how gained you entrance? whence come you? what is your purpose?"

"Look on me, Christian," said the African; "do not the lineaments of this face strike thee with terror? Behold me, thou remorseless tyrant! Ozembo stands before thee, the injured husband of the violated, murdered Yarilla. Behold me thy deadly foe confessed. I have escaped the mines of Potosi, journeyed through untrodden paths, sustained alone by the desire of vengeance. I had no bribes to offer to thy pampered menials, who, like thyself, are heartless, proud, and cruel; therefore I devised the means to pass thy servile guards, and, by my own powers, have gained admittance here. Does not thy coward heart suggest why the husband of Yarilla stands beside thy couch?"

Too well the guilty heart of the marquis suggested, and at that moment of terror he would have given an hundred worlds, had he possessed them, to be able to restore Yarilla uninjured to the arms

of her husband, in whose flaming eye he read, with shuddering nerves, his own inevitable doom.

“Dost thou not know,” resumed Ozembo, “one only motive could make me seek thy hated presence? Baldivia! robber! destroyer! that motive is revenge!”

The knee of Ozembo pressed the stomach of the marquis, who, frantic with horror, made violent efforts to free himself from the strong muscular grasp of Ozembo; but finding himself unequal to the contest, he called on Lazarillo and Sebastian, whose particular office it was to be always near the person of their lord; but his attendants, seeing him sunk in a deep sleep, had left the temple, to seek their own pleasures in a distant quarter, purposing to return before he should awake.

“You call for help in vain,” said Ozembo; “before thy menials can approach, my retributive weapon will be buried deep in thy heart.”

“And thy own life, audacious slave,” replied the marquis, “thy own life will pay the forfeit; thou wilt be made to

yield thy breath in lingering, excruciating tortures—slow fires, the dislocating wheel—thy life——”

Ozembo smiled contemptuously, as, interrupting Baldivia, he eagerly answered —“ My life! of what value is life to me? Thou hast barbarously torn asunder the only link that held me to existence—my Yarilla, my murdered wife. For her Ozembo bore to live—for her he comes resolved to die; but vengeance first demands its victim; and were I certain that racks, and wheels, and flames, await me, no abject fear, no coward dread of what this frame might suffer, should tempt me to forego my purpose. Thou hast debased a chief of Africa with the vile name of slave. That I am a slave will, if the doctrine of your vaunted Christian faith be true, plunge into deepest hell your savage countrymen, who, by rapine, cruelty, and murder, brought me to your detested land, cast galling fetters on myself and dearest relatives, and sold us to your unwholesome mines. What, alas! is life to such a wretch as me? I loathe and hate the



world, and most of all mankind, Baldivia, tyrant, thee! Oh, what is life to me, torn from my country, bereft of her whose gentle innocence, whose tender smiles, lightened my heavy burthen of calamity! Having sacrificed thee, murderous oppressor of my race, poured out thy blood to her lamented shade, and taught the wretched Africans, by my example, to redress their wrongs, I have resolved to die. When the excruciating pangs of death convulsed my Yarilla, while her dying eyes were fixed in earnest gaze upon me, I promised her that I would quickly follow. She waits upon the frontier of eternity, nor seeks the bower of bliss appointed for her residence till her Ozembo joins her. Hark! heard you not her voice? Even now she chides my tardy vengeance, and upbraids my cold delay."

Ozembo's arm was again raised, and the grim form of death glared before the appalled eyes of Baldivia. Unprepared to die, dreading the eternal punishment of his offences, with abject prayers he solicited his life, offered freedom to all the slaves

labouring in the mines of Potosi, promised to freight vessels, and convey them back to Africa. "Throw aside that murderous weapon," said the marquis, "and I swear, Ozembo, to acknowledge thee, in the face of the world, my dearest friend and brother. Forget thy cause of bitter'enmity," continued he; "be merciful, devote me not to death, and I will place within thine arms the fairest of our Peruvian maids—I will share with thee my boundless wealth."

"Slave of thy evil passions! abject wretch!" returned Ozembo; "I scorn the friendship of a base oppressor—I despise thy offers. Cursed be thy wealth, wrung from the sweat, the tears and blood of my devoted country! Detested white man! the sooty African despises thee, and joys to think his skin is tinted with a different hue to thine. Thou so bold in crime, to gratify whose brutal appetites and savage passions, an unoffending race have been enslaved, our country plundered, our females violated, husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers, massacred—dost thou fear to die? The monk Velasco preached of burning

caverns, of sulphureous lakes, of devils armed with scorpion whips and iron scourges ; if such a hell there is, may its deepest, darkest pit be thy eternal residence ! This for desolated Africa ! this for my murdered Yarilla ! and this, and this, for Ozembo's and for Zoan's injuries."

As he spoke, with infuriate hand he plunged his knife deep in the body of the marquis, which, gashed with mortal wounds, and covered with blood, fell from the splendid couch to the feet of Ozembo, who, trampling on his neck, waved the crimsoned weapon over him, exclaiming—  
"Yarilla, behold thy ravisher ! The tongue that gave the mandate of cruelty is mute ; the heart that meditated acts of tyranny swells no more with pride or guilty passion. Now to the mines again, to tell my hapless countrymen Baldivia's reign is past ! to rouse their torpid spirits, and animate them to revenge their wrongs ! Oh, if they feel as I do, not a white man will escape ; or if the Spaniards cannot be subdued, the Africans, like me, will die, and purchase freedom with their blood."

The disfigured body of Baldivia, weltering in gore, was an object of pleasure, gratifying to the eyes of Ozembo, whose rage was not yet satiated. Ripping open the breast of the marquis, he tore out his heart, yet warm and palpitating, and bearing it with triumphant exultation from the temple, he again sought the grove, where, at the foot of an orange tree, reposed the cold remains of Yarilla.

Madness had now taken possession of the brain of Ozembo. He drew the veil from her face, on which the moon shed its pale beams, and holding up the heart of Baldivia, he whispered—"Yarilla, my beloved, awake! I have avenged thee! See the monster's heart! Come, come, we must away. Speed thee, my Yarilla; the work of revenge must be completed. Deep in every white man's heart will I write thy wrongs, my Yarilla. While the blood spouted from the tyrant's bosom, I laughed at his agonies. Here, here! trample! tear his savage heart!"

The tender Yarilla was spared a sight of so much horror, at which, though

deeply injured, her gentle spirit would have mourned. Death had numbed her limbs, and the frantic Ozembo waited in vain for a reply from that voice, mute for ever. A ray of recollection darted on his fevered thoughts, and he exclaimed—"Destroyed! dead! oh, murdered Yarilla! But I forget—my friends at Potosi anxiously expect my coming. Yet I will not leave thee here, my beloved; oh, no, no! living or dead, I have sworn never to separate from Yarilla."

He now hastily wound in her veil the lifeless form of his wife, to which he attached the knife, yet reeking with the blood of the marquis de Baldivia. On its point he stuck the horrible trophy of revenge—his heart; and with this load he retraced his way back to the silver mines of Potosi.

An hour after midnight the earl of Avondale arrived at Paluda, impelled by the virtuous hope of preventing crimes, and sparing an effusion of human blood. The presence of the earl of Avondale, so unexpected, and at such a time, together

with his earnest inquiries for the marquis de Baldivia, recalled to the recollection of Lazarillo and Sebastian, that some hours before they had left him sleeping in the temple.

In compliance with the earl's request, he was conducted thither. On the white marble steps, over which the lamps shed a brilliant light, they observed, as they approached near, marks of footsteps traced in blood. The earl of Avondale, as he surveyed the horrible witness of murder, shuddered; a fearful presentiment shot across his brain, that some astonishing and dreadful event was about to be disclosed. His pulses chilled as Yarilla, murdered by Baldivia, pressed upon his thoughts.

Addressing Lazarillo, whom he knew was the confidential agent of the marquis de Baldivia's intrigues, he sternly demanded where and how the unfortunate wife of Ozembo was disposed?

Lazarillo hesitated; the noble character of Avondale awed him, and a sentiment resembling shame forbade his reply; but being informed that the oppressed Afri-

cans had risen on the Spaniards, and that no white man's life was safe, Lazarillo felt that the cruelty of the marquis had given his slaves just cause for revolt, and in a moment of such imminent peril he considered concealment useless, and made a full disclosure of the dreadful sufferings and outrage committed on the defenceless Yarilla by the brutal marquis.

“Monster!” exclaimed the indignant Avondale, “remorseless tyrant!—wretched, unhappy Yarilla! But answer, to what dungeon has the savage Baldivia consigned his victim? or has the savage—this blood,” pointing to the steps, “confirms the supposition; has he completed his cruelty by ending her being? Answer at once! say—the innocent, outraged Yarilla is dead.”

Lazarillo and Sebastian solemnly declared their ignorance in this particular.

“Alas!” said Avondale, “the gentle, amiable marchioness, how, how will her innocent nature bear the knowledge of a husband's infamy? how will she endure the certainty of his villanies, on whom her affectionate heart fondly dotes? But why

do we linger here?" continued he, rapidly ascending the steps; "to know the worst evil that can befall is ease and happiness, compared to the horrors of imagination—the tortures of suspense."

The blood of Baldivia floated the marble pavement. The earl of Avondale rushed to the interior. The rich velvet draperies of the couch were torn from the gilded canopy, entangled in which lay the mangled body of the marquis, so disfigured with ghastly wounds, that, from his habit only, could be identified the late handsome, graceful marquis de Baldivia.

The earl of Avondale recoiled in horror from the fearful spectacle, while Lazarillo and Sebastian asked of each other who had committed this horrid murder?

Immediate orders were given to search the palace and the grounds, while the disfigured body of the marquis, pale and breathless, was laid on the couch, which a few hours before he had pressed, exulting in successful guilt, and flushed with the disgraceful triumph over a shrieking slave.

It was now discovered by Lazarillo that



the heart of Baldivia had been torn from his breast. The suspicion of the attendants attributed the horrid act to Yarilla, but I azarillo answered—"No—it could not be; Yarilla was too feeble from the punishment of the whip. This murder could not be committed by so weak an arm."

"Call it not murder!" said the earl of Avondale; "retributive justice has at length overtaken the pitiless tyrant—has cut him off in the mad career of guilt. This is Ozembo's deed, and, gracious Heaven! while humanity shudders to behold this mangled corse, who shall presume to say, reflecting on his injuries, the African is cruel or unjust?"

The earl of Avondale having dispatched messengers to Lima, to the nearest relation of the marquis de Baldivia, informing him of the dreadful termination of his life, unable to ascertain the fate of Yarilla, returned again to Potosi, where all were in a state of alarm.

The horrid death of the marquis had already reached the ears of Rosaviva, who, while she wept the fall of an unworthy

husband, trembled for her own life, the Africans having murdered several Spaniards, and entered into a league to spare no white man's life.

Apprehensive only for the safety of the marchioness, who seemed sunk in afflicting despondency, the earl of Avondale prevailed on her to set off for her parental seat, the castle of Deloricad, there to remain till an opportunity offered of quitting for ever a country which the crimes of her husband had rendered dangerous to her life, and destructive to her happiness.

To many of her friends, who were flying in terror from Potosi, the marchioness offered an asylum in her ancestral palace at Lima, and with herself at Deloricad; but the first days of a widow's grief held out so little attraction, that even a prospect of safety could not overcome the repugnance, and only donna Violante accepted the invitation of accompanying Rosaviva to her castle. Neither was fear for her own life, nor compassion for the affliction of the marchioness, the motive that actuated donna Violante, but the hope of subdu-

ing the cold, proud heart of the earl of Avondale, who, among the bowers and shades of Deloricad, in the retirement of a romantic castle, she fancied would be more vulnerable than in the gay throng which for ever hovered round him at Potosi.

The little Octavian and Isabella travelled with the marchioness, while part of her retinue hastened forward to announce the approach of their beloved mistress to the ancient domestics at Deloricad.

Frantic with injury, and terrible in wrongs, Ozembo unexpectedly appeared among his countrymen assembled on the heights of Potosi. Breathless, and panting from fatigue, he tore the veil from the face of Yarilla, and displayed on the point of his bloody knife the heart of their tyrant, Baldivia.

Zoan, rushing to his embrace, beheld the lifeless form of his sister, her flesh torn and bruised by the cruel whip. Nature, in spite of all that prejudice has said or wrote to disprove her works, is in all nations the same, and the feelings of an African are as tremblingly alive to the

touches of sensibility as those of a European.

Zoan, as he gazed on the loved form of his sister, melted into tears; but catching the stern and fiery glance of Ozembo, who held, with upraised arm, the heart of their destroyer, he hastily dashed his tears away.

“My soul is firm,” said Zoan; “revenge is now the only feeling to be indulged.”

“Revenge! instant revenge!” was loudly echoed by the sable band, who eagerly thronged around Ozembo, to hear his piteous tale, and glut their eyes on the savage heart of their oppressor, the now-powerless marquis de Baldivia.

“This is the favourable moment,” said Ozembo, “appointed by the Great Spirit to break our chains. This very now, my brothers, no longer slaves, rush on the white men, and avenge your country and yourselves. Mark what my single arm achieved! In the body of Baldivia my knife has made a thousand gaping wounds! This hand tore out his savage heart! and

thus be the wrongs of Africa avenged on the accursed Spaniard !”

As he spoke he dashed the heart of Baldivia on the flints, spat upon it, and trampled it under his feet. His example was followed by Zoan, and imitated by the rest of the Africans, who, kneeling round the body of Yarilla, swore to avenge her sufferings, by spilling the blood of every Spaniard in the province.

“ Spirit of vengeance !” said Ozembo, spurning with his foot the now-shapeless heart, “ may this detested mass be food for birds of prey ! Now you who resolve to free yourselves from slavery, embrace your leader.”

The Africans alternately clasped the neck of Ozembo, who, looking towards the east, exclaimed—“ God of the Africans, fire the bosoms of thy children ! nerve each determined arm ! enable us to break the yoke imposed upon our necks ! deliver to our wrath these Christian dogs, who have despoiled our land, and wrested from our bosoms, with brutal violence, our wives and children ! God of the Africans !

give us the panther's rage—the lion's strength! direct our weapons to the white man's heart, and in his dying moments let him own the justice of African revenge!"

Almanza de Ojeda, who succeeded to the possessions of the marquis de Baldivia, was a man of great personal courage, which had been proved and exercised in the battles of Spain; but though fame had given him laurels, fortune had but scantily rewarded his services, and the intelligence that conveyed to his ear the death of Baldivia, and his accession to his titles and wealth, was received with expressions of unequivocal joy.

Ojeda was, like his predecessor, proud, fond of ostentatious splendour, and greedy of riches. The revolt of the slaves was therefore a business of consequence beyond every other consideration; for without slaves the silver mines of Potosi could not be worked; and though the wealth to which he succeeded was immense without this appendage, the avarice of Ojeda could not relinquish a possession which he was conscious was only to be rendered valuable

by the miseries and toils of his fellow-men.

With the utmost expedition, Ojeda convened his friends and vassals, and, losing not a moment, arrived with a strong force at Potosi, to reduce the Africans, whose deeds of desperation spread terror throughout the country, sacrificing, without distinction, every white person that fell within their power.

The good and venerable Velasco, who, with religious fervency, had attempted to restore order, and preached resignation to the Africans, fell one of the first victims to their frantic vengeance, which had now risen to a height that threatened the total demolition of all the whites who ventured within the barrier; for already Ozembo, with triumphant shouts, had given to his followers the horrid example of setting fire to the habitations of the overseers and inspectors of the mines, and amidst the dying groans and despairing shrieks of their wives and infants, their blood, which deluged the earth, hissed in the red curling flames, spreading around in wide and terrible devastation.

At this tremendous moment, when the

fire, raging with terrific violence, extended its flaming arches towards the city, the marquis de Ojeda, with his troops, entered Potosi; by their timely exertions the progress of the fire was stopped; personal safety made every man ready to arm against the blacks, who, it was rumoured, were advancing towards the city, where universal terror seemed to pervade the inhabitants.

The marquis de Ojeda, accustomed to war, considered the little army of Africans with contempt, and ordering his men to follow him, he gave the frightened populace an assurance, that before sunset, he would reduce the blacks to their former subjection, and restore the city to tranquillity.

Interested in the fate of the unfortunate, though greatly-erring Ozembo, the earl of Avondale resolved to join the force of Ojeda, that he might act, if possible, as a mediator between the Africans and Spaniards. Leaving only a sufficient number of men to guard the gates of the city, the marquis de Ojeda reached the foot of the Potosi



mountain, at the head of a well-armed troop, whose exertions were much impeded by the showers of stones hurled on their heads by the blacks, who having possession of the heights, spread havoc and confusion among their foes.

It was at this important crisis that Zoan, whose intrepid valour had outstripped the little band, of which he was the leader, fell into the hands of the Spaniards; this circumstance being made known to the marquis de Ojeda, he commanded a square to be formed in view of the blacks, who, in defiance of the steady fire kept up by the Spanish musketry, continued to tear up the deep-sunk rocks, under whose ponderous weight they crushed and buried many of their assailants, while the rest, undaunted by the dreadful fate of their comrades, prepared to scale the steep side of the mountain.

The wretched Zoan, covered with his own blood, which gushed from unnumbered wounds, was led to the presence of Ojeda, who thus addressed him—"The marquis de Baldivia, on whom the slave

Ozembo took a revenge, at which human nature shudders, being no more, behold in me your lord. Go to your rebellious countrymen; bid them survey the Spanish force, and think how vain contention is with such unequal numbers; bid them lay down their arms, seek their forsaken huts, and by refreshment and repose, fit themselves, at to-morrow's sunrise, to pursue their former occupations in the mines. This is the moment of mercy; if they accept my offered pardon, it is well; but at the expiration of the passing hour, if one rebellious slave assail a Spaniard, by the holy cross I swear, I will not quit this spot till each revolting black measures his lifeless length upon the mountain's bloody height. Release this slave," said Ojeda to the soldiers who guarded Zoan; "let him bear my message of pardon to his brethren; if they refuse my proffered grace, their blood be on their heads!"

"White man," replied Zoan disdainfully, "dost thou see these gaping wounds? no groan has heaved my breast—no murmur of complaint at pain escaped my lips;

my countrymen exceed me far in fortitude ; they are content to bleed ; but their brave spirits will never yield to voluntary slavery."

Ojeda frowned as Zoan continued to say — " Dispatch a Spanish messenger to the mountain ; thy debasing edict shall never pass the lips of Zoan ; I, from my inmost soul, disdain thy mercy, and judge my brethren's rejection by my own ; they, like me, will treat with scorn the offer of a pardon dictated by the sordid hope of making us again submit to toil your patient slaves. Christian, I tell thee, this glorious struggle is for revenge and freedom ; if we fail, each African knows how to die with fortitude !"

The marquis de Ojeda experienced the boiling passions of rage and disappointment — " Your fortitude shall be tried, audacious slave !" exclaimed he ; " instantly impale him, full in the view of his rebellious comrades, and from his tortures let them learn their own impending fate !"

The stake was sharpened on which the undaunted Zoan was intended to writhe ;

the soldiers, by command of Ojeda, were formed into a crescent behind the intrepid youth, who looked on the arrangements for his horrible fate with unshrinking nerves, while the vassals of Ojeda, and the inhabitants of Potosi, in columns on each side, stood with shuddering hearts to witness the execution of this horrible command. In vain the earl of Avondale remonstrated, and by every humane argument opposed a punishment so dreadful.

Ojeda listened with unrelenting heart; stern, cruel, and inexorable to the pleadings of pity, he gave the signal, and the heroic Zoan, with a countenance calm, and mien erect, was led to the middle of the crescent; but at that moment a shout, loud as if the foundations of the earth had been rent asunder, burst from the mountain, down whose precipitous side the Africans poured, and foremost Ozembo, fire flashing from his eyes, and distraction in his gestures.

With giant strength he forced his way through the ranks of Spaniards, from whom, astonishment at his Herculean prowess had

taken the power of opposition; having reached Zoan, he exclaimed—"Thus, my brother, I free thee from the white man's cruelty!" but his strength was unequal to the effort he made to case his knife in the bosom of Zoan, against which its point only glanced—"The weak, irresolute Africans," said Ozembo, sinking on the earth, "fear to die; they will again be the white man's slaves, when thou and I are with Roseb and Yarilla."

The blood gushed from a deep wound in his breast, and the voice of Ozembo was mute for ever. The Africans were now mingled in bloody contention with the Spaniards, and in the wild confusion, the horrible slaughter that ensued, the sentence of impalement, about to be executed on Zoan, was forgotten. From the dying grasp of Ozembo, Zoan had snatched his weapon, and, with desperate courage, dealt death around to all who opposed themselves against its point. For some minutes the victory remained doubtful, for the voice of Zoan animated the Africans; but a wound he received in his

arm from the sword of Ojeda forced his weapon from his slackened hold, and in the next instant a blow on his head mingled him with the slaughtered heaps that covered the bloody plain.

It was now the courage of the Africans began to fail; their leaders had fallen, and confusion and dismay seized on their hearts; the force of the Spaniards so far exceeding theirs, rendered the contest hopeless, while the superior skill of soldiers disciplined to arms, and led on by an experienced general, soon obtained a decisive conquest. The wretched blacks, wanting the intrepid courage of Ozembo and Zoan, on the marquis de Ojeda again offering them pardon, with one consent threw down their arms, and accepted life on the condition of returning to their labour in the silver mines of Potosí.

The earl of Avondale, whose courage had twice preserved the life of Ojeda in the battle, beheld the submission of the Africans with mingled emotions of regret and pleasure; he rejoiced that carnage had ceased and tranquillity was restored, while he lamented the fate of the unhappy beings

who had preferred an existence of hardship and slavery to glorious death.

Orders being given for burying the dead, the earl of Avondale, who had learned that the corse of Yarilla yet remained on the mountain, himself explored the field of battle, in search of the bodies of the ill-fated Ozembo and Zoan, which having found, he obtained permission from the marquis de Ojeda to inter together, according to his own pleasure. As the benevolent Avondale contemplated the mangled bodies of the unfortunate brothers, he fancied there was yet motion, though very faint, about the heart of Zoan; medical assistance being instantly procured, the humane exertions of the earl were recompensed in seeing the unhappy object of his cares unclothe his heavy eyes, and by hearing him breathe a faint sigh.

The marquis de Ojeda being acquainted with the circumstance of Zoan's existence, and understanding the more than common interest the noble Avondale evinced in the fate of the youth, himself took the trouble of conversing with the surgeons, who agreed

in opinion, that if the African should recover, which at that time remained very doubtful, the wounds he had received in all parts of his body would totally incapacitate him for future labour in the mines, where great strength was an indispensable requisite.

Such a slave, weak in body, and, from past circumstances, likely always to continue gloomy and unsatisfied in mind, was an object, in Ojeda's judgment, better dismissed than retained. Having thus considered the case of Zoan, he artfully made a show of participating the earl of Avondale's humane feelings, and, with well-dissembled pity for his errors and misfortunes, declared him free, in compliment to the earl, his generous friend, who appeared so anxious for his fate.

At the same moment that Ojeda affected compassion and liberality, he coldly surveyed the scarcely-animated Zoan, holding the belief, that death, the mighty conqueror, was about to emancipate him from all human bondage, to set him free from



pain and slavery. The brave and noble Avondale watched by the couch of the African with unwearied kindness, and only quitted him to inter, on the heights of Potosi, the mangled remains of the unfortunate Ozembo and his lamented Yarilla.

On a gentle declivity of the mountain, for the most part bare and rocky, but here covered with short verdant turf, the earl of Avondale reared a beautiful but simple tomb over the faithful pair, on which his inclination would have recorded the mournful history of their undeviating love and unequalled misfortunes, but respect and tenderness for the feelings of the marchioness forbade his disclosing and perpetuating the vices of Gonzalo de Baldivia; and though the rites of the church were denied, and no religious ceremonies were observed at their interment, yet the earl of Avondale, as he knelt beside the tomb, dropped the tear of genuine pity on the earth that covered Ozembo and Yarilla, and breathed a prayer of warm and sincere devotion for their eternal happiness.

Round the tomb his own hand planted

cypress, and the fragrant gum-dropping orchid, under whose long, dark, shining branches, when many fleeting years had passed away, the Africans, at their hours of leisure, when the moonbeams glittered on the dew that hung on the pale marble, used to assemble, and pensively reclining on the turf, relate to their attentive children the melancholy history of Ozembo and Yarilla, execrating the barbarous tyranny of guilt, and weeping their disastrous loves.

.. The mutilated body of Gonzalo, marquis de Baldivia, was removed to Lima, to be deposited with his ancestors in their stately mausoleum, at the gates of which (before they closed on the richly-emblazoned coffin, whose massy gold ornaments recorded the pompous titles of the wretch inclosed within), a long funeral eulogium was pronounced by the monk who headed the solemn and magnificent procession that followed the remains of Gonzalo de Baldivia to that place where the dust of a grandee of Spain is not distinguishable from that of his meanest slave; and those who were

acquainted with the real character of the deceased marquis heard with indignation the servile monk celebrate, in glowing and elaborate language, virtues to which his heart had ever been a stranger, and enumerate acts of charity and munificence, to which pride and ostentation had alone been the incentive.

Rosaviva, in the tranquil shades of Delorcad, knelt at the tomb of her parents, and bowed her heart to the dispensations of Providence; spite of the atrocities of her husband, which continually met her knowledge, her heart had not learned to hate him, and his dreadful end, cutting him off in the height of crime, filled her with grief and horror; and though his death released her from an alliance sincerely and unceasingly regretted, her heart mourned, and her eyes wept, the disappointment of her love, and her desolate, widowed state.

The revolt of the slaves at the mines was also a subject of infinite concern and alarm, for with its other dreadful consequences it involved in imminent danger the life of the earl of Avondale, her true friend

and near relation. At this distressful period, donna Violante exerted her utmost powers to support and console the widowed marchioness ; full of animation, she continually devised entertaining schemes to win Rosaviva from the contemplation of her husband's dreadful fate, which ever obtained from the fair mourner a smile of gratitude, though, at the same time, a tear contended with it for mastery.

Violante having one morning fancifully twined a wreath of roses and myrtles, drew aside the mourning veil that shaded the pensive countenance of the lovely marchioness, and sportively placed on her wavy tresses the fragrant offering of friendship, at the same time exclaiming, in animated tones—" Thus ever be the brow of beauty crowned !"

Rosaviva burst into tears; she mournfully covered her face with her veil, and left the apartment.

The lively Violante felt convinced, that instead of diminishing the grief of her friend, she had poignantly awakened it—" I am sorry, very sorry, for the error I

have committed, and must endeavour to atone for it," said Violante; "but how?" after musing some moments on an invention that she thought would prove entertaining to the marchioness, and make amends for her inadvertent folly, remembering too late, that Gonzalo de Baldivia's first declaration of love was accompanied by a wreath of roses and myrtles. As she mused on her plan, her ear caught the sound of a lute, touched by Isabella, with tolerable skill and taste; supposing Rossiva was listening to the music, and of consequence restored to composure, Violante passed into the oriel chamber, from which the sounds proceeded.

The marchioness was not there, only Isabella, who was trying to modulate, to an old popular air, some lines which Rossiva had just written; they were addressed to Violante, and ran thus:—

Oh, take again this wreath of thine !  
Of glowing rose and myrtle twine,  
For they were gather'd when the sun  
His brilliant morning course began  
With gay, unclouded shine.

Yet if by tender friendship led,  
Thou wilt persist to crown my head,  
Oh ! let thy fingers weave for me  
The willow branch and cypress tree,  
With tears of evening spread.

Unlike the rose's brilliant glow,  
Such wreath my wayward fate will shew,  
Condemn'd, through length of weary years,  
To shed the sad and silent tears  
Of heart-consuming woe.

Intelligence from the earl of Avondale was anxiously expected by the marchioness, who, though removed to a distance from the scene of tumult, scarcely considered herself safe from the fury of the blacks ; and to such a state of melancholy was she reduced, that the lively sallies and tender soothings of donna Violante, who suppressed all expression of her own fears to inspirit her friend, passed almost unregarded, while Isabella, her African attendant, seemed to occupy all her thoughts.

From this interesting creature the amiable Rosaviva carefully concealed the whole of Ozembo's dreadful history, and detained her constantly in her presence, that the worst particulars of the commotions at the

silver mines might not come to her knowledge ; but it was impossible to keep her ignorant of the revolt of the slaves, and the affectionate Isabella, feeling for her countrymen, and interested for the safety of the earl of Avondale, the benevolent European, to whose generous interference and noble spirit she owed the blessing of liberty, and the hope of eternal happiness, through her conversion to Christianity, wept and trembled with her lovely mistress.

At length dispatches arrived from the earl, announcing the submission of the blacks, and the return of most of the troops to Lima ; the letters of Avondale spoke also of affairs of consequence, that would detain him some time longer at Potosi, which having settled, he should have the honour of introducing to her at Delorica the marquis de Ojeda, who was extremely desirous of paying his respects to her in person.

The marchioness pressed the letters of Avondale to her heart, and devoutly thanked Heaven, that in the midst of her heavy

afflictions, this noble, virtuous friend and relative was spared to her: but though tranquillity was again restored, Rosaviva ceased not to lament the slaughtered wretches, whose bodies were interred at the base of the Potosi mountain, who but a few days since exulted in health and the prospect of increasing years.

“Alas, alas!” said the marchioness, sighing heavily, “such is the vanity of human expectations—such the illusive promises of hope!”

The little Octavian, while he improved in health and beauty, presented a likeness of Gonzalo de Baldivia that pained the bosom of the marchioness, as she viewed the curve of his ruby lip, and the splendour of his dark eye; yet his affectionate manners and engaging prattle considerably beguiled the melancholy hours of their length.

Some weeks had elapsed in perfect seclusion, on the part of the marchioness, who had admitted no visitors at Deloricad, when dispatches from the earl of Avondale put the castle in the bustle of preparation, he having announced the time when, with



the marquis de Ojeda, he should be at Lima, and from thence proceed to Delorica. This intelligence made donna Violante almost frantic with joy. Isabella expressed pleasure, and the marchioness felt an emotion of delight at her heart, to which she had long been a stranger.

The day, however, on which the earl and his party were expected, passed without their arrival, and the following morning every face seemed clouded with disappointment, and a thousand apprehensions were entertained for the earl. The fingers of the fair Spaniard swept the chords of Isabella's lute; she attempted a lively air, but the notes she struck were wild and mournful. The attention of Isabella was occupied by some pieces of amber that circled her wrist, on which her tears fell, as, full of some tender remembrance, she pressed them to her lips.

Dissatisfied with her own attempts, Violante was moving towards Isabella, with an intention of placing the instrument in her hands, when suddenly a distant shout was heard. Images of horror and appre-

hension were still hovering in the imagination of Rosaviva ; she cast a look of despair on Violante, while, sinking on her knees, she raised her white hands to heaven, and faintly uttered—" Avondale ! my noble, virtuous cousin ! if he has fallen, let me not, oh, merciful Disposer of events ! let me not survive to mourn his loss !"

Isabella, trembling and weeping, strove to support her fainting mistress, while donna Violante, the image of dismay, stood pale and terrified, listening to the shouts that every moment, louder and louder, burst upon her ear. The arrival of the earl of Avondale, with the marquis de Ojeda and their followers, occasioned the joyful acclamations of the peasantry and vassals. The marchioness received her guests with tears of gratulation, while donna Violante spoke her welcome in blushes and broken sentences.

Almanza de Ojeda was past the meridian of life, neither handsome in person nor brilliant in understanding, and totally deficient in those attractive qualities that engage the warm affections of a female heart.

On his first introduction to the marchioness, he was fascinated with her beauty, though folded in the sable robes of widowhood. At the gentle sweetness of her voice, he felt the sternness of his nature melt, and for the first time in his life, Almanza de Ojeda wished to appear pleasing in the eyes of a female.

To the charms of women he had hitherto been insensible; ambition had fired and dazzled, and during all his life had been the ruling passion of his soul—even in the warm days of youth, when he heard of men sacrificing glory and interest for the possession of beauty, he considered them cowardly and base, and experienced towards them only sentiments of scorn and contempt; but a very few days past at the Castle Deloricad, in the society of the lovely marchioness, made him a convert.

Ojeda was astonished at the new train of ideas that crowded his brain, and the new wishes that throbbed in his heart; his very nature seemed to undergo a change, for he felt that love was a passion superior

lory, and to obtain the favouring  
of Rosaviva, he would willingly  
surrender all his hard-earned laurels, snatched  
from conquered foes.

While this strange revolution was ef-  
fected in the heart of the marquis de Ojeda,  
a Violante, unsuspecting of the state  
of her affections, was displaying all her  
powers to attract and subdue the insensible  
Avondale, who, totally unconscious  
of her power in the bosom of the fair Spa-  
nish, devoted all his attention to arrang-  
ing the fortune of the marchioness, and  
cheering her melancholy, whose only plea-  
sure seemed to be talking of England, and  
anticipating their departure for that happy  
country with the first vessels that sailed  
from Peru to Europe.

"On this theme she dwelt on with delight—  
"How truly happy I shall be," said  
Rosaviva, "when I breathe the air of Eng-  
land!"

"And how miserable," returned Vio-  
lante, with a deep-drawn sigh, "how  
miserable will you leave your friends  
in Peru!"

“Not so, I trust,” replied the marchioness, “nor would I be thought insensible to the regard professed for me ; but recollect, dear Violante ! I am now left without a protector or relative, the earl of Avondale excepted, and it is natural I should wish to see and reside in the country of which my beloved and lamented mother was a native. My friends in Peru,” continued she, “may, perhaps, honour me now and then with their remembrance ; but newer friends and dearer connexions will, I make no doubt, console them for my absence.”

“It will be long, very long,” rejoined donna Violante, “before my sorrow yields to consolation ; truly, I think,” added she, fixing her large melting eyes on the earl, “nay, I am certain that I shall carry my regret for our separation to the grave.”

Rosaviva was at this moment fondling Rolpho, Baldivia’s wolf-dog, and saw not the direction of Violante’s glance ; but it was impossible for Avondale to mistake the expression of her look, or the meaning of a speech delivered with such peculiar

emphasis; his face instantly caught the crimson suffusion of hers, to hide which he also stroked the ears of Rolpho, who had rested his shaggy head on the white arm of his mistress.

“ You,” replied the marchioness, “ dearest Violante, will, in a short time, return to your native country, where your beauty and your amiable qualities will secure to you a more beloved friend than me; for I hold in remembrance the faithful passion of a certain noble youth.”

“ He is my aversion,” interrupted Violante, blushing deeply; “ it is true he has sent me his picture, and flatters himself that he shall obtain my hand; my parents too favour his suit, for he is rich, young, and handsome.”

“ And what,” asked the marchioness, “ if he possesses youth, riches, and a handsome person, what can you possibly found an objection on?”

Violante blushed a deeper crimson, and hesitated to reply.

Rosaviva, pursuing the subject, observed—“ What, dearest Violante! but abso-

lute caprice can influence your refusal of a match so advantageous in every point of view? surely, my friend, you cannot be serious in your declaration of dislike."

"Is there no cause," asked Violante, "which, in your opinion, might authorize me to refuse this alliance?"

"No," answered the marchioness, "none that I can think of, except a prior engagement with, or prepossession in favour of another."

"And such a prepossession," said the earl of Avondale, who understood the drift of Violante's question, "such a prepossession ought to be combated, lest it involve the heart in cureless misery, though I acknowledge it is hard to resign a beloved object."

"Hard!" repeated Violante; "it is anguish unutterable; the men of my nation are seldom kind or tender husbands; I have a heart that could neither brook jealousy nor coldness—for this reason I incline not towards a Spanish alliance. No," continued she, smiling, "if ever I marry, which is extremely doubtful, of all nations,

I think I should prefer an English husband."

"You are too wise to hold this opinion," replied the earl; "when you return to Madrid, the noble don Carlos will be a successful wooer; educated in the same faith, born in the same country, and bred in the same customs, you will find that in contributing to his felicity you will ensure your own."

The announcing of dinner put an end to this conversation, which had piqued the pride of donna Violante, by proving to her that the affections of the earl of Avondale were already bestowed, or not to be obtained by her. At table she ate but little, and soon after withdrew. The passions of the fair Spaniard were too violent to be lasting; their vehemence wore them out.

Having wept bitterly her own want of attraction and Avondale's insensibility, she took the picture of don Carlos Mirandola from its case, and with a latent hope of rendering the earl of Avondale jealous and uneasy, she hung it on her bosom. Her sister and some friends having arrived from



Lima to visit the marchioness, their approbation soon influenced her own, for on their pronouncing don Carlos extremely handsome, she continued to wear his miniature; and the inflexible coldness of the earl aiding the suit of don Carlos, the volatile Spaniard became convinced that the man her friends favoured was certainly more than good-looking, and every way deserving her love.

"The earl of Avondale beheld the transfer of her regard, and felicitated himself on not having felt for her a sentiment of tenderness. "What misery," said he, "for a man to love a capricious creature like this, whose affections are so easily diverted from one object to another!"

Preparations were now making for the departure of the earl of Avondale and Rosaviva for England, which the marquis Ojeda beheld with much secret discontent, as his admiration of the fair widow every day became stronger.

After some painful and serious conversations respecting the affairs of the late marquis de Baldivia, Rosaviva, believing

the little Octavian to be really his son, secured for his future establishment in life, a liberal portion of the possessions which became hers by the death of her husband; she then made a formal renunciation of the titles and other property of the marquis de Baldivia, and announced her intention of again assuming her own family name.

Ojeda's sentiments were not delicate enough to understand Rosaviva's reasons for this utter abdication, but he received it as an omen that her love and grief for her first husband would not prevent her accepting a second, and, agreeable to this idea, short as was their acquaintance, he seized the first moment of their being alone to make her an offer of his heart and hand—"A hand," said Ojeda, "rough, and accustomed only to the hardy exercise of war—a heart till now insensible to female attractions, but trust me, lady, honest, and willing to exert its best energies in the promotion of your happiness."

The marchioness heard this abrupt declaration of love with surprise and disgust. Her husband's remains scarcely cold—her

present suitor the heir to his title—these thoughts passing rapidly through her mind prevented her immediate reply. Ojeda construed her silence into acceptance of his offers, and proceeded to say—“ You answer not to my solicitations, lady; and unaccustomed as I, a rough soldier, am to the soft arts of flattery, I want eloquence to plead my passion, and win from you the approval of my wishes.”

Rosaviva perceived, by the arrogance of his manner, that she was leading him into error; she therefore replied—“ My lord marquis, the sorrows I have already experienced in the nuptial state will for ever deter me from risking a renewal of them. I remain your debtor for the honour of your favourable opinion, and beg you to accept my best wishes for your happiness, with some female whose unprejudiced mind may leave her at liberty to accept your alliance.”

Rosaviva gracefully bent to the marquis and withdrew. The pride of Ojeda was wounded; as he strode in anger and disappointment across the floor, an opposite

mirror reflected his figure; for a moment he surveyed it.—“Nature,” said he, “has not stamped my person with that insinuating grace, nor given my features the soft, flexible movement, the deceitful smile, that charms these dainty moppets. Well, be it so; I was not formed to win a woman’s love, nor shall a woman’s charms rob me of peace. Why, what had I to do to think of marriage—I who have spent my life in camps? Woman, fantastie toy, thou theme of boys, thou charm of idiots! I renounce thee. Never again, for a single moment, shall Ojeda yield the dominion of his mind to woman’s caprices.”

The marquis de Ojeda kept his word; he renounced the sex, and passed the remainder of his days unmarried.

The unfortunate Zoan, nearly restored to health, had arrived in the suite of the earl of Avondale at Delorica. During his confinement, in consequence of his wounds, the earl of Avondale had remained by his couch, soothing his pains with unwearied kindness, and supplying his necessities not only with liberality, but tender atten-

tion. This humane and generous conduct had removed from the mind of the African his detestation of Christians, and inspired it with gratitude sincere and lasting; but while the earl's generous friendship supplied every external comfort, it failed to extract the deep-rooted anguish of his soul.

Ora, his early, only love, yet lived in his remembrance with unfaded charms. Ozembo and Yarilla were yet cherished in his inmost heart; his sorrowing tears still wept their sufferings. In the deep silence of the night he addressed their spirits, and lamented that he was yet chained to earth, and separated from their loved society.

Isabella knew that a young African, wounded in the late affray at the silver mines of Potosi, was in the suite of her benefactor, the earl of Avondale; but as yet she had never seen him, as, being an invalid, he had an apartment in a remote part of the castle, though she understood, from peculiar circumstances, he was an object of much interest to the earl and her lady.

Zoan was repeatedly told by the noble

Avondale, that the marquis de Ojeda, pitying his misfortunes, had restored him to freedom, and that his strength once renewed, he was at perfect liberty, and might, if he chose, return to Africa.

“Ozembo and Yarilla!” said Zoan, sighing heavily, “they dwell no longer on the amber island; but Ora, my tender Ora—yes, I will return to Ora. Generous white man! the soul of Zoan, for thy sake, will love the Christians, will pray to the Great Spirit that they may hereafter live in friendship with the Africans. Ora, dearest Ora! since it is permitted him, Zoan will return to his native groves, and dwell with thee.”

The air of Deloricad having effected his perfect cure, Zoan was one morning brought into the boudoir of the marchioness by his patron the earl of Avondale. The knee of Zoan was bent, and the white hand of Rosaviva raised to his lips, when Isabella, with a loud shriek, let fall a valuable china vase, in which she was placing flowers.

The astonished eyes of Zoan beheld, in

the fainting form supported by the earl, his Ora, the worshipped of his heart—her for whose dear sake he was about to relinquish his Christian friends, and return to the wilds of Africa.

A short time passed in the society of Isabella completed the conversion of Zoan, and on the subject of his return to Africa being introduced by the marchioness, who begged him to inform her what articles of Peruvian produce and manufacture would be most serviceable in his own country, he burst into tears, and, in strong emotion, said—"Zoan will return no more to Africa; the friends of his youth are removed to realms beyond the clouds. Zoan will return no more to Africa, for happiness resides there no longer. The God of Isabella shall be Zoan's God; England will soon be Isabella's land, and with Isabella I am fixed to live and die."

A few days after this declaration, the rite of baptism bestowed on Zoan the name of Walter Grey, and the following week he became the husband of his beloved Isabella; and such was the attach-

ment of these simple, unsophisticated beings, that they declined an advantageous settlement proposed to them in Peru, to follow their generous patrons to England, preferring their protection and service to every prospect of future wealth.

Rosaviva did not bid adieu to South America without emotions of regret. She had not yet ceased to lament her respected parents, nor had her heart forgotten Gonzalo de Baldivia; but she was yet very young, and hope waved before her the fairy wand, that presented a circle of expecting friends, in whose endearments she should forget the bitter disappointments of her early days.

Favouring breezes filled the sails of their ship, and after a short and pleasant voyage, the white cliffs of Albion were hailed by the shouting sailors. After an absence of near four years, the earl of Avondale beheld the shores of England with transport. He took the marchioness by the hand, and followed by the faithful Africans, ascended the deck.

Leading them forward, he pointed to-



wards the shore.—“ Yonder,” said the earl, “ lies the island of Great Britain, the land of liberty, the mart of commerce, the nursery of science, the emporium of arts, where, instructed by the wisest laws, and inspired by the purest religion, its legislators have abolished, and for ever, the inhuman traffic for slaves. The laws of England, my friends, protect the lives and properties of the meanest individuals. Slavery is unknown, and amidst all its unrivalled wealth and magnificence, its proudest boast is its freedom.”

## NOTES.

*Page 223.*—The story of Ozembo and Yarilla, unhappily for the honour of human nature, is not a romance, but actually owes its prominent incidents to a horrible event that took place at the beginning of the last century, when the circumstance of a negro woman being forced from her husband by a brutal planter on the Island of Jamaica, occasioned an insurrection of the slaves, who rose upon and massacred some hundreds of the inhabitants of Kingston and Port Royal. At a moment like this, when abhorrence of traffic for human beings, and commiseration of the sufferings of the oppressed Africans, are the general feelings of Great Britain, I presume to join my weak efforts with those of higher energy, trusting that the era is not far distant, when the humane example of England will emancipate the unhappy race of negroes from the barbarous tyranny of whips and tortures; and infusing a spirit of liberality into every Christian nation, teach them to believe that Africans, as themselves, are *men*, endowed with the same sense of kindness and injury, and, animated with the certain conviction of liberty, would exert their powers to prove, that their Almighty Creator had bestowed on them talents to promote the interest, and virtues to adorn society.

*Page 225.*—According to the report of travellers and historians, the silver mines of Potosi in Peru, in the audience of Charcas, were discovered somewhere about the year 1567. These mines are contained in a conical mountain, bearing the name of Potosi; they consist of solid rock, and the ore is so extremely hard, that it is broken with heavy hammers, when the silver splits into large flakes like flint. These mines are worked by negro slaves brought from the different islands of Africa, of which it is computed that five hundred die every year, from the causes of labour beyond their strength, the punishment of the whip, and various other tortures. The mines of Potosi are the richest in Spanish America.—*Vide Salmon's Geographical Grammar.*

*Page 236.*—It is related, that for mere sport, the Spaniards will cut off the hands and noses of their slaves, and ~~give them to their dogs; and when a negro dies from the~~

tortures inflicted on him, it is no uncommon case, for one Spaniard to lend another a quarter of the dead body, as they would lend a quarter of pork, to be returned in kind when they killed a slave, for food for their dogs.—*Vide Salmon's Geographical Grammar.*

*Page 264.*—It is a fact, that Emmanuel Xavier, a Jesuit, who zealously endeavoured the conversion of the Africans, visiting the mines of Potosi, the day after a slave had been roasted before a slow fire, for attempting to escape, found the unhappy negroes in a state of revolt, and fell a victim to the infuriate spirit of revenge excited by European barbarity.

*Page 270.*—The slave-trade in Portuguese America is carried on to an amazing extent; not less than four thousand unhappy Africans are annually imported to Brazil, the chief of which are employed in the gold and diamond mines, where they are treated with a barbarity at which humanity shudders, while they supply their tyrants with every luxurious and voluptuous enjoyment.

*Page 296.*—The Africans are by no means stupid, or destitute of that understanding and comprehension which would, with proper instruction, make them useful mechanics; nor are they deficient in genius. The author of this work, when at New York, met with a volume of poems, chiefly on religious subjects, the effusions of a negress, published at Charleston; and when at Halifax, Nova Scotia, she read several little affecting poems, written by a black man, who worked as ship-carpenter in the dockyard. These are proofs sufficient, that had Africans the advantage of liberal education, there would be found among them talents as strong, and genius as brilliant, as ever illumined the mind of a European.

END OF VOL. III.

---

Printed by J. Darling, Londenhall-Street, London.

---

# UZALO DE BALDIVIA;

OR,

## A WIDOW'S VOW.

**A Romantic Legend.**

---

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

---

Inscribed,

BY PERMISSION,

TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, Esq.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*MAN PICTURES, SICILIAN MYSTERIES, CONVICTION, SECRET  
ENGERS, CHRONICLES OF AN ILLUSTRIOUS HOUSE, &c. &c.*

---

"The sooty African within his breast may bear  
A heart replete with all a Christian's virtues."

---

VOL. IV.

---

London:

*Printed at the Minerva Press for*

NEWMAN AND CO. LEADENHALL-STREET.

---

1817.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

# GONZALO DE BALDIVIA.

---

## CHAPTER I.

---

“Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turn’d,  
Nor hell a fury like a woman scorn’d.”

.....

The most virtuous characters do not escape the venom of slander, for the vicious are ever on the watch to reduce them to their own level.”

.....

“Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow,  
Thou shalt not escape calumny.”

**A**FTER an absence of four years from his native country, the arrival of the earl of Avondale in London was no sooner publicly announced, than his friends hastened in crowds to his house to welcome his long-wished return, and pay their respects to the lovely stranger, lady Rosaviva de Molines, whose elegance and beauty,

the theme of universal admiration, created no inconsiderable portion of envy. The countess of Hartcourt met the earl of Avondale, with all the transport of a mother who had suffered a long separation from the son of her affection ; and as, with pleased eye, she contemplated the person of the beautiful, graceful Rosaviva, she breathed a mental prayer that the virtues of her beloved de Grey, as she continued to call him, might at last be rewarded in obtaining the hand of his lovely, amiable cousin.

Propriety not allowing lady Rosaviva to reside in the mansion of the earl of Avondale, the countess of Hartcourt relieved his perplexities, and her delicate scruples, by offering a part of her own house till an establishment could be fixed on more agreeable to her wish. This kindness was most gratefully accepted by lady Rosaviva, who, thoroughly acquainted with the character of the countess, from the representations of the earl of Avondale, felt most happy to reside under her protection ; the little Octavian and his attendants, Walter

Grey and Isabella, with four English servants, composed her suite, and went with her to the mansion of lady Hartcourt, which being spacious, the apartments of lady Rosaviva were soon arranged to her entire satisfaction.

Lord and lady Monteith were among the earliest visitors to the noble Avondale, and on a mind like Rosaviva's, the gentle manners and superior accomplishments of lady Monteith could not fail of making a favourable impression; they were mutually pleased with each other, and the first visit of lady Monteith laid the foundation for a friendship that lasted through life. Lady Monteith was now the mother of three beautiful children, the youngest a girl of the same age as Octavian, who soon became attached to Elinor Monteith, more fondly than to the rest of his little playmates.

When the earl' of Avondale was informed that madame Montalban, the venerable grandmother of lady Monteith, was no more, he felt no sentiment of sorrow,



## GONZALO DE BALDIVIA.

for he was convinced her piety and resignation under heavy misfortunes had insured her eternal felicity; but the intelligence of the unfortunate Theodore's death shocked him to the soul, and gave him uneasy feelings, for which he could not account.

On Theodore Montalban's return to France, he was in a weak state of health; the air of his native country did not contribute to his recovery; he fell into a rapid consumption, which terminated his existence, at a pleasant villa on the banks of the Garonne, whither he had retired with lady Gertrude soon after his marriage. The duke of Saxelby was also dead; and a part of his possessions being unalienable, having fallen by heirship to his daughter, lady Gertrude Montalban, she having passed the first year of her widowhood at her seat, Norley Abbey, had returned to London, and established herself in a very splendid and expensive style in Grosvenor-square. As the widow of a tenderly-beloved and still-lamented brother, lady Monteith visited, and received the visits of lady

Gertrude, though by no means partial to her; yet as other persons of character and distinction did not refuse her intimacy, lady Monteith was averse to appearing fastidious, or to evince a desire of keeping alive the remembrance of her former indiscretions; notwithstanding the very little notice she took of her daughter, the innocent Laurette, betrayed an utter want of natural affection, and gave lady Monteith a bad opinion of her heart, while it convinced her that the passion she so well affected for the unfortunate Theodore had been merely assumed to answer present purposes, as none of it appeared to be felt for his child, who had the exact features of her buried father.

The magnificent style in which lady Gertrude Montalban lived, gave rise to much exaggeration with respect to the extent of her fortune; obtaining credit for infinitely more wealth than she possessed, lady Gertrude was continually surrounded by a train of mercenary admirers, who were anxious to add her possessions to their own, or to mend their broken fortunes by

her alliance; among these, sir Henry Levison was most assiduous in his devoirs. Sir Henry Levison had gambled deeply, and his estates were much injured by the ill success with which he had played; absolutely detesting the person of lady Gertrude, he yet considered her fortune worth the sacrifice of his liberty; wherever she appeared, sir Henry, like her shadow, was seen also; and his attentions were received with such apparent favour, as induced the public, who have only appearances to judge from, to set him down as selected by her to receive the honour of her hand.

But whatever intention lady Gertrude might have had in favour of the gay sir Henry Levison, while the earl of Avondale was absent from England, his return made an entire and instant alteration in her sentiments; she beheld him handsomer than ever, and infinitely more attractive; he was yet unmarried, neither did the world speak of any engagement; and she resolved to leave no stratagem untried to soften his obdurate heart, and obtain his love. To aid this design, lady Gertrude

thought it necessary to adopt a new character; and supposing that melancholy would appear most interesting, she spent whole hours at her toilet, consulting her glass for becoming modes of arranging her hair, and framing her features to pensiveness. Having brought her countenance to wear a semblance of sorrow, the more to awaken Avondale's tender sympathy, she took occasion several times to shed tears in his presence, when her deceased husband was mentioned, whose loss she lamented with a mournful pathos, which she thought could not fail of exciting his tender commiseration. But the earl of Avondale was not to be deceived by this affectation of sensibility; in every word, look, and gesture, he discovered the actress, and read design; even had his heart been free from attachment, he was too well acquainted with the real disposition of lady Gertrude, to accord her the smallest portion of esteem; as the widow of Theodore Montalban, he behaved to her with politeness, but, as a woman, he knew none he less approved.

The beauty and wealth of lady Rosaviva

de Molines afforded conversation for all the higher circles; and though she lived extremely retired, and seldom went into public, there were many men of high rank who impatiently waited the period of her throwing aside her weeds, to declare the passion she had inspired. As yet lady Rosaviva had not been presented, but the term of her mourning being at length expired, the earl of Avondale, aided by the countess of Hartcourt and lady Monteith, strongly urged her to go to court the ensuing birthday; the timid modesty of Rosaviya shrank from encountering the observation this public ceremony would necessarily draw on her; but finding it was a custom hardly to be dispensed with in a person of her rank, she yielded a reluctant acquiescence with the wishes of her friends, and set her faithful Isabella to work, who was delighted with the employment of making preparations for the appearance of her beloved mistress at court, where, she understood, all the young nobility of the nation assembled, and where it was possible she might forget to lament the mar-

quis de Baldivia, and be induced to bestow her heart on one more worthy of its virtues.

The society of the enlightened and distinguished persons admitted to the intimacy of the countess of Hartcourt, had diverted the mind of lady Rosaviva from dwelling too intently on the dreadful end of her husband; the conviction too of his utter unworthiness had contributed to reconcile her to his loss; and though her spirits had not yet recovered their naturally cheerful tone, she was tranquil and resigned, while in the maternal tenderness of the countess of Hartcourt, she felt consoled for the loss of her parents; as her grief wore away, her beauty became more brilliant and impressive; she no longer secluded herself, her eyes were no longer dim with tears, and the delighted Avondale began to hope that the image of Gonzalo Baldivia would in time be worn from her heart. As he met the melting glance of her blue eye, and saw the smile of pleasure dimple her rosy mouth, he remembered

she was free to receive his vows, and he entreated Heaven most fervently that she might accept them—"Grant," said Avondale, "she may hear with favour my long-concealed affection! grant, gracious Heaven, that Rosaviva may be mine!"

The important day at length arrived, and lady Rosaviva de Molines was presented by her friend, the countess of Hartcourt, to the majesty of England. A whisper of admiration ran round the circle, while every eye was turned with approving gaze on the beautiful stranger; this public exhibition confused and agitated the modest Rosaviva; she complained to the countess of the excessive heat; but before she could retire without the circle, the vivid crimson that had mantled her cheek gave way to snowy paleness, and she fainted; the earl of Monteith being near her when the accident happened, bore her from the drawing-room; lady Monteith communicated the alarming circumstance to the earl of Avondale, and begged him to conduct her to lady Rosaviva. Avondale's look of consternation was not lost on lady Ger-

trude Montalban, and she followed their steps, not to ascertain or assist in the recovery of lady Rosaviva, but to observe the conduct of Avondale.

The countess of Hartcourt and lord Monteith had succeeded in restoring lady Rosaviva to recollection; and the tender solicitude of Avondale, the tone of voice in which his inquiries were made, the expression of his looks, and the manner in which he supported her to the carriage—all convinced the envious, mortified lady Gertrude, that he had a heart sensible of love, and that its affections were devoted to his cousin. Many other ladies who had secretly sighed for the handsome earl of Avondale, and who had also accused him of coldness and insensibility, now saw the motive and instigation of his conduct, and, spite of vanity, confessed that lady Rosaviva de Molines was indeed worthy of his love.

The gentlemen, too, who had waited the expiration of her mourning with impatient hope, saw, in the anxious concern and solicitude of the earl of Avondale, the utter



disappointment of their wishes ; yet none, however great their mortification, beheld the passing occurrence with half the jealousy, rancour, and envy of lady Gertrude Montalban, whose countenance, inflamed by rage, spoke the hurricane brewing in her bosom. The universal approbation excited by the person, manner, and costume of lady Rosaviva de Molines, was a dagger to her malignant heart, and filled her with emotions of fury, malice, and hatred ; but when she beheld the tenderness depicted in the manly countenance of the earl of Avondale, as he bent over the pale form of Rosaviva, she read love in his eyes ; and nothing doubting that it was reciprocal, and that engagements were actually formed between them, rage so possessed her soul, that feigning indisposition, she hastily returned home to meditate vengeance—to plot destruction to the happiness of the lovely, innocent being she considered her rival—to methodize a mighty vengeance on the insolent obstinacy of the earl of Avondale, who had shut his eyes against her charms, and wilfully rejected

her advances, to bestow the heart which she had aspired to on the waxen doll his cousin.

The motion of the carriage, with the free admission of air, soon removed every symptom of indisposition from Rosaviva; and the fears of the countess of Hartcourt and the earl of Avondale were shortly removed by her declaring herself perfectly well; but not being able to prevail on her friends to return to court, she retired to her dressing-room, and divesting her person of the splendid habit embroidered with gold, and glittering with diamonds, she arrayed herself in a simple cambric robe—"I detest the vanity of dress," said Rosaviva, as she descended with light step to her boudoir, where, free from the restraint and interruption of visitors, the happy trio passed together a delightful evening: never had Avondale experienced hours so full of soul, never had he been half as happy, for Rosaviva, free from hateful ties, sat beside him; he touched her white hand, she spoke to him in a tone of cheer-

fulness, and her smile appeared the reflection of his own.

For the first time since their arrival in England, Rosaviva called for her lute, and at the request of Avondale, she sung some of the simple canzonets that had so charmed his tasteful ear at Potosi; but different were his feelings now—Rosaviva sung, and the warbled harmony was to gratify him and his maternal friend; in Peru, her lute and her song were only expressive of sorrow.

“ Oh, ask of your heart, as you stray through the grove,  
If that heart has been yet taught to feel,  
What maids are so form'd to inspire it with love,  
As the fair ones you meet in Castile.

“ With the gay castanet, as they dance through the grove,  
Each movement will beauty reveal;  
You'll find, if the world you are fated to rove,  
No fair ones like those of Castile.”

It was later than usual when the earl of Avondale rose to depart—“ Good-night, dear de Grey,” said Rosaviva, as he held her white hand to his lips; the countess

of Hartcourt also affectionately bade him good-night; but he heard only the silver tones of Rosaviva, her "good-night, dear de Grey," accompanied him to his pillow; and in his sleep imagination repeated the sentence amidst visions of happiness.

The next morning, Rosaviva found two letters on her breakfast table, both declarations of love, and earnest entreaties to be allowed to hope for her favour. Rosaviva, having hastily perused their contents, placed them before the countess of Hartcourt, saying—"Read these epistles, dear madam, and instruct me how to answer them." The countess did as she was requested; she read the letters, and replied—"The noblemen who address you, my love, are men of most estimable character, equally unexceptionable in rank and fortune; the earl of Somerville is near forty years of age, but universally allowed to be extremely handsome; the marquis of Feversham is some years younger, and though not so handsome in features, is considered a very fine figure."

"I thank you, dear madam," said Rosa-

viva, “ for describing these noblemen, though it was an unnecessary trouble; their persons create neither curiosity nor interest in my mind, for I have no intention to form a second matrimonial alliance ; no,” continued she, with a mournful sigh, “ my wedded life was full of misery, and Heaven having been graciously pleased to restore me to liberty, I shall not again put my happiness to risk by placing it in the keeping of a husband.”

“ You cannot surely be serious in this declaration,” replied the countess ; “ you are still very young, and know not what happiness may yet await you in the connubial state; these noblemen, I assure you, are both very deserving men.”

“ No doubt,” interrupted Rosaviva ; “ but while I acknowledge the honour they have done me by their proposals, to you, my dear madam, I will ingenuously confess, they can neither of them be my choice.”

“ Perhaps,” said the countess, “ your rejection of these offers proceeds from a preference your heart feels for another.”

“ I have no wish,” said Rosaviva, blush-

ing deeply, “to alter my condition; blest as I am with the friendship of de Grey and yourself, what more can be wanting to my happiness? already deluded by a faultless exterior, I have made a fearful trial of matrimony, and were I again to put my peace to hazard, should I not be most unwise?”

“Much,” replied the countess, “may be said on this subject; and I could wish——”

Whatever were the wishes of the countess, she was prevented from disclosing them by the entrance of company; and shortly after lady Rosaviva retired to answer her letters, to express her sense of the honour done her, in the offers of her suitors, and to put at once a negative on their hopes.

In the course of the morning the countess of Hartcourt informed the earl of Avondale of the proposals of marriage Rosaviva had just received, and from whom.

“And which,” asked he, turning pale as death, “which will she accept?”

“Neither,” returned the countess, smiling at his agitation; “Rosaviva declares

she will never alter her condition ; yet I trust she will be brought to recede from this resolution—it is my wish that she should marry.”

“ Your wish is cruel to my feelings,” said the earl ; “ yet, with either Somerville or Feversham, she would be happy ; for they are both worthy characters, both honourable men.”

“ I do not wish Rosaviva the wife of either,” returned the countess ; “ no, de Grey, your felicity is of the utmost moment to me ; the hand of this lovely, interesting creature is, I trust, reserved for you.”

“ Would to Heaven I dared believe it!” said the earl.

“ Why,” resumed the countess, “ why will you not follow my counsel ? why not at once declare to Rosaviva the state of your heart ?”

“ A motive of delicacy restrains me,” replied Avondale ; “ it has been my good fortune to render Rosaviva some trifling services, which her gratitude estimates too highly ; were I to disclose my passion, gra-

itude might influence her to accept my vows, and I might owe to a generous sentiment her hand, while her heart remained cold and unconscious of affection. No, I will place an everlasting seal upon my lips, unless some blessed chance discover to me that Rosaviva yet can love; and that in bestowing her hand on Avondale, she would also give the rich treasure of her heart."

The announcing dinner put an end to this conversation; at table the behaviour of Rosaviva was cheerful, and far less restrained than usual; and when the countess spoke of her having that morning refused two matrimonial offers, she sportively asked the earl the reason why he did not enter into the connubial state?—"The countess is so great an advocate for wedlock," said Rosaviva, "I marvel she has not persuaded you, Avondale, to take a wife."

The face of Avondale crimsoned; he attempted to speak, but the unuttered sound expired on his lips; he paused and hesitated, till Rosaviva, supposing she had



touched some painful chord in his heart, began to apologize for the question she had unwarily asked—a question she observed, with concern, agitated and distressed him.

“It was my misfortune,” replied the earl, recovering firmness, “to love a female whose heart and hand, before we met, were bestowed on another.”

“Alas!” said Rosaviva, “this was indeed misfortune most severe; and I entreat you,” continued she, extending to him her white hand, “pardon me that I have unwittingly touched on this unpleasant theme.”

The earl pressed his lips on her hand—“Allow me,” said he, “to proceed; for years this mournful secret remained locked within my bosom—I had the misery to behold the object of my adoration, lovely, virtuous, and unhappy.”

“Unhappy!” repeated Rosaviva; “yet I think you said she married where she had given her heart?”

“Most true,” answered the earl; “the lovely innocent, deceived by a handsome

exterior and specious manners, became the wife of an unprincipled libertine—a profligate, whom her virtues failed to reclaim; he died a martyr to his vices.”

While the earl spoke, the countenance of Rosaviva underwent several changes—“In the midst of many a fiery trial,” continued Avondale, “this young and lovely creature evinced a sublimity of forbearing virtue, that while it astonished, increased my adoration of her; yet my lips never uttered the feelings of my bosom; in respectful silence my heart worshipped her, as the most perfect of created beings: she is now at liberty, and many noble suitors contend for the honour of her hand; she is surrounded by admirers.”

“Among the worthiest in the land,” said Rosaviva, eagerly, “you, dear de Grey—you are most worthy, most deserving.”

“Such is my opinion,” observed the countess, who had been an interested auditor of this conversation; “none can be more worthy than de Grey—he who loved her when even destitute of hope—he who for her sake has declined many advanta-

geous alliances—he is most deserving of her, and frequently I have urged him to declare his passion.”

“How,” asked Rosaviva, a smile of pleasure dimpling her rosy mouth, “can it be possible? is the lady yet a stranger to your love?”

“Unless she has read it in my eyes,” replied Avondale, “my lips have never uttered the devotion of my heart.”

“Your lips are to blame, cousin,” returned Rosaviva, blushing and playing with a nectarine; “for who knows but this silence of yours may be equally distressing to the lady, who, if she feels a reciprocal passion, is forbid by custom to disclose it.”

“A mistaken delicacy,” rejoined the countess, “keeps de Grey silent.”

“Whoever the lady be,” resumed Rosaviva, “she is honoured by the preference of the earl of Avondale; whatever her virtues, her rank, her possessions, he stands as proudly eminent. I would I knew the lady, I would be his advocate—I would tell her——”

“What, sweet coz,” asked Avondale, perceiving she paused, “what would you say in favour of my suit?”

“I would tell her,” said Rosaviva, “to make use of her eyes, for they would seldom rest upon a finer form—I would tell her to respect your noble qualities, and I would entreat her to love you, because, acquainted with your character, I know of none more worthy to be loved.”

At this moment, so interesting to Avondale, while his heart encouraged the rapturous suggestions of hope, while his ear drank in the inspiring language of Rosaviva, lord and lady Monteith entered; they were going to the theatre to witness the representation of a new tragedy, and they called to persuade the countess of Hartcourt and lady Rosaviva to be of their party.

The good temper of Avondale almost forsook him; for though Rosaviva would have preferred remaining at home, she fancied, from the manner of the countess, that she inclined to go to the theatre; she therefore expressed her readiness to be one

of the party, to the extreme vexation of Avondale, who regretted the loss of an opportunity that seemed so favourable to his dearest wishes—an opportunity that might not soon occur again.

The theatre was well filled by people of fashion, and the entrance of lady Rosaviva de Molines drew many gazers towards the stage-box, in the centre of which she was placed, where her modesty was infinitely pained to find she attracted so much attention, for her ear often caught the sound of admiration, excited by her beauty and elegance.

In the midst of an affecting scene of the play, lady Gertrude Montalban, with a noisy party, came into the next box, among whom were sir Henry Levison, and a tall, sallow-looking Frenchman, whom they called the count de Pyllaric. The face of lady Gertrude was dressed in smiles of affability while she saluted the countess of Hartcourt, who sat next her; but envy, hatred, and rage filled her bosom, as she beheld the earl of Avondale's eyes fixed on the face of Rosaviva, who was so entirely

occupied by what was passing on the stage, that she had not observed the entrance of the party who had taken possession of the next box.

Neither the tragedy, nor its performance, engaged any part of lady Gertrude's attention; the fury of jealousy inflamed her, and she could scarcely constrain herself to reply with temper to the questions of sir Henry Levison, who, weary of her monosyllable answers, turned from her in disgust, and began talking and laughing aloud with lord Fortescue, a young nobleman of good heart, but extreme weak intellects, who had just returned from his travels, and shaken off his tutor, a man of very lax morals, who, instead of attending to the improvement of his pupil's mind, and furthering his means of information, had merely assisted him to spend large sums of money, and enlarge his stock of effrontery.

Lady Gertrude was at no pains to conciliate sir Henry Levison, but continued intently observing every look exchanged

between the earl of Avondale and Rosaviva, whom her malignant jealousy considered and hated as a rival; but though she saw them, between the acts, earnest in conversation, her ear could not catch a single word they uttered; but jealous fancy supplied professions, compliments, and replies; nor was the excessive ill-humour of lady Gertrude at all appeased by the openly-delivered comments and opinions of her own party, who unanimously agreed that lady Rosaviva de Molines was by far the most lovely female that had appeared in the circles of fashion for the last ten years. Darting a look of mingled anger and contempt at sir Henry Levison, lady Gertrude haughtily demanded if he also held the same opinion with his friends, who had evinced so accurate a judgment in deciding on the perfection of beauty?

Sir Henry Levison, nothing disconcerted by her question, and determined to mortify her vanity, protested he thought lady Rosaviva de Molines a divine being, an angelic creature!

“ Angelic! divine!” repeated lady Ger-

trude, with a scornful laugh; “poor man! I really pity your bad taste—why she is a mere waxen doll—who ever heard of blue eyes and light hair possessing the charm of animation! her countenance is downright insipid, without the slightest pretension to meaning or sense; her whole stock of beauty is comprised in a fine complexion, and I have no doubt, for much of the brilliancy of that, she is indebted to pearl powder, milk of roses, and Circassian bloom.”

“Of that,” said lord Fortescue, starting up, and seizing the arm of the count de Syllaric, and dragging him, most unwilling to stir, with him, “of that I will be convinced, for if she does paint, she lays it on with inimitable skill.” He then rudely bounced into the stage-box, still leaning on the arm of the count, and, without considering the ceremony of introduction at all necessary, he attempted to draw Rosaviva into conversation, who, from the reserved manner of her friends, perceived they conceived his intrusion indecorous; she therefore did not wish to encourage his bold fa-



miliarity. Nothing abashed by the reserve with which his endeavours at intimacy were received, lord Fortescue attempted to thrust himself on the front seat next to Rosaviva; but believing him to be inebriated, and supposing he would be troublesome, lord Monteith firmly opposed his intention, calmly observing that the front seat had been engaged by himself, and he could on no account consent to the ladies being disturbed and incommoded.

Lord Fortescue had drank too freely, and his reply was a defiance of lord Monteith to prevent his sitting where he pleased; his speech was followed by an effort to push himself between lady Monteith and Rosaviva; the earl of Avondale seeing her alarm, started up, and warmly insisted on the intruders quitting the box; the count de Syllaric, in very bad English, attempted an apology, and would have persuaded lord Fortescue to withdraw; but, furious with the opposition he met, and mad at not being able to carry his point, he made a blow at lord Monteith, which he avoided; but, indignant at the insult,

would have thrown lord Fortescue into the pit, had not the ladies, shrieking with terror, clung round him and prevented a further scuffle; in the mean time, the count and Avondale forced the offender from the box.

During the tumult the performance had been suspended, but though tranquillity was restored by lord Fortescue quitting the house, the harmony and pleasure of the evening were destroyed; the ladies had been terrified, and were not without apprehension of the return of the intruder, and not being able to resume the interest they had felt in the representation, they left the theatre.

Lady Gertrude Montalban saw them depart with malignant triumph; she was pleased to know they had been annoyed, and from the disturbance that had occurred, she determined on stabbing the domestic happiness of lady Monteith, blighting the fair fame of Rosaviva, and effecting an eternal separation between her and the earl of Avondale—a general destruction, which to her fancy appeared easy to

achieve, from the quarrel of Monteith and Fortescue, both men of fiery spirits and known courage.

The insult lord Monteith had received from the unthinking Fortescue was of a nature not to be overlooked; it was given in a public place, in the immediate presence of his friends, and in the sight of many persons of rank. Lord Monteith was also a colonel of dragoons, and to be supposed wanting in courage, would have been to render him infamous in the opinion of his own brave troop. It was impossible to conceal from lady Monteith the necessity of her husband challenging lord Fortescue; and scarcely was she more affected at this terrible demand of honour than Rosaviva, who had, by the means of lady Gertrude Montalban, gained the distressing information, that it was to introduce himself to her lord Fortescue had obtruded into their box; and that on her account it was likely one or both of these noblemen would be deprived of life: nor was this all the affliction that fell on the innocent Rosaviva; much as the princi-

ples of the earl of Avondale condemned the horrid practice of duelling, he found himself compelled, as well from friendship to lord Monteith, as being a party concerned in the affray, to be the bearer of the challenge, and the second of lord Monteith.

The challenge was accepted, on the part of the offending Fortescue, with an easy indifference that shocked the conscientious Avondale, who would have persuaded him to make a serious preparation for the consequences that it was possible might arise from his exchanging shots with lord Monteith.

Fortescue poured out a bumper of wine from a bottle that stood at his elbow, and swallowing it, said—"This is my preparation; Monteith, I suppose, will make his will; but, as I have no gentle consort or pretty babe, why I shall let my heirs scramble for my property, and divide the spoil as they can."

The grief and alarm of lady Monteith, on this trying occasion, had been excessive, and demanded all the fortitude of her husband to prevent the wild expression of her

sorrow from reducing him to a weakness, which would have rendered him incapable of meeting his antagonist with becoming spirit.

On the morning lord Monteith was to expose his life to the shot of Fortescue, the wretched Julia sunk into a stupor, and she received his parting embrace, and heard him bless and commit his children to the protection of Heaven, without shedding a tear, or seeming to recollect that she saw him, perhaps, for the last time.

In all the agony of maternal grief, the countess of Hartcourt beheld her darling Avondale prepare to attend his friend Monteith; but with admirable fortitude she suppressed her own emotions, and endeavoured to calm the sorrow of Rosaviva, who, trembling, pale, and almost lifeless, received the adieus of the friends, who separated from her to repair to the place appointed for the meeting.

“They are gone,” said Rosaviva, in a voice of despondency; “I shall see them no more; oh that I could die also—that I could close my eyes for ever, and escape

the anguish of seeing those I most respect and love torn from me! oh Avondale, beloved friend, we shall meet no more!" The countess attempted not to check the tears that fell in torrents from her eyes, for she well knew, in events like the present, all human consolation would be vain.

Monteith and Avondale, on quitting their carriage, found the volatile Fortescue and count de Syllaric already on the field, and waiting their arrival; their salutation being past, the count measured the ground; the first shot was fired by lord Monteith; the ball slightly grazed the temple of Fortescue, who, spite of his levity, felt conscious of having conducted himself with great impropriety at the theatre; instead therefore of returning the shot of lord Monteith, he fired his pistol in the air; he then advanced towards him, and made a polite and manly apology; the seconds considered what had passed as sufficient for the honour of both the gentlemen; and after mutual assurances of goodwill towards each other, the opponents parted.

Lord Monteith hastened home to relieve the apprehensions of his wife; but Julia was not in a condition to rejoice that Heaven had spared the father of her children; a fever, the consequence of grief and terror, had seized her brain, and she was many tedious weeks before she became sensible that she was spared the misery of lamenting his fall. During her long illness, lady Rosaviva de Molines was her constant attendant; she watched by her during her delirium, and her hand administered all her medicines, evincing, by her tenderness and solicitude, at once the humanity of her disposition, and her sincere friendship for the fair sufferer; nor were her cares confined solely to the sick chamber, for active in benevolence and virtue, lady Rosaviva constantly visited the nursery, and bestowed on the little ones of her friend all the anxious kindness of a mother, tenderly solicitous for the health and comfort of a beloved progeny.

During the long confinement of lady Monteith, the schemes of lady Gertrude Montalban lay dormant; but her mind had

been in full employ, and out of the very virtues of lady Rosaviva de Molines, she determined to extract a poison which should be fatal to the domestic peace of lady Monteith, and destructive to the fame and happiness of her whom she considered her rival, whose baby charms deprived her of the only heart she thought worth subduing.

The visits of lady Gertrude to her intended victim were artfully made when the innocent Rosaviva was absent, and always employed by her in hints and base insinuations against the motive that actuated her extraordinary friendship. Lady Monteith, generous and virtuous herself, and loving Rosaviva with the affection of a sister, continued for some time unconscious of lady Gertrude's meaning; but from hints being continually dropped, she grew more observant; by degrees she began to believe the friendship of her lord was too warm towards Rosaviva, whose kind and tender attention to her children, she fancied, might be snares for the heart of her husband, as lady Gertrude had often insi-



ness. Full of these ideas, she became restless, discontented, and unhappy; and in her watchful looks and peevish replies, Montreuil discovered that, agreeable to her imagination with the mind of lady Montreuil was discomfited by jealousy; but perceiving that she wavered in her belief, and at times felt ready to acquit Montreuil and Rosalva of evil intentions, she collected a heap in her chamber, at different times, anonymous letters, in which she was warned to beware of the deceptions of a certain mysterious friend, who had already robbed her of the affection of her husband, and who was actually labouring to subvert the principles of her children, with the design of alienating their hearts from her also.

These letters lady Montreuil read with agonizing feelings, at some moments resolving to show them to her husband, at others resolving to bury their contents in her closet. Remembering the generous affection of lady Montreuil, his unvarying kindness, she thought it impossible he should be malicious and deceitful; she reflected on the amiable character

ter, her unwearied attendance on her sick-bed, and her gratitude did justice to her virtues and her friendship; but again, as she perused the letters, her heart was tortured, and in the rage of jealousy she vowed to detect their guilt—to expose to public scorn her faithless husband and her perfidious friend.

The earl of Avondale had also letters sent to him, declaring that the public were not deceived by the specious behaviour and pretended friendship of lady Rosaviva de Molines for a certain fair invalid; on the contrary, her shameful intrigue with the husband was clearly understood, notwithstanding the hypocritical attempt to veil it under commiseration and attention to the sick wife.

The earl of Avondale was too intimately acquainted with the virtue and purity of Rosaviva, to give the smallest credence to such detestable slander; anonymous intelligence he had ever despised; but steadfast as was his faith in Rosaviva's virtue, he was wounded to the soul to perceive

that her undeviating innocence had not secured her character from defamation; and that, noble, generous, and compassionate, as was her nature, she had enemies who were determined, if possible, to tarnish the lustre of her fame, by converting her humane concern and tender friendship into weapons against herself. In the rejection of the offers made her by the marquis of Feversham and the earl of Somerville, he had flattered himself that Rosaviva had been actuated by a predilection in favour of himself; but while he reconsidered the contents of the anonymous letters, he could not suppress a pang of jealousy; he reflected on the manly figure of Monteith, yet in the meridian of life, and, with a sigh of anguish, confessed it was highly probable such a person as his might make an impression on her heart, and influence her refusal of the noblemen who had solicited her hand. Rosaviva had declined matrimony, and the reason his jealousy suggested wrung his bosom with agony; it was possible that she might love Monteith, but

it was sinning against Heaven to believe she had, even in thought, sullied her chastity.

As the bodily health of lady Monteith returned, her mind became more and more diseased; with lynx-eyed suspicion, she attended to every word uttered by Rosaviva, and watched every turn of her eye, anxious to meet a confirmation of what her soul dreaded, the loss of her husband's love, and the falsehood of her friend; the most trifling attention that politeness demanded from lord Monteith to Rosaviva was a dagger to her heart; the poison of jealousy was diffused through her frame; it extended to her temper and manner, which had lost much of its gentle sweetness. It was evident lady Monteith recovered health, and Rosaviva felt infinite concern to observe she grew every day more fretful, peevish, and dissatisfied; on lord Monteith this change of disposition in his beloved Julia did not pass unnoticed; he had, though unsuccessful in the attempt, endeavoured to wile from her the cause of an alteration so evidently detrimental to

herself, and painful to his feelings; but Julia could not bring herself to speak the thought that rankled at her heart, and bursts of tears or sullen silence continually met his tender solicitations and remonstrances.

With patient sweetness, Rosaviva had suffered to pass unnoticed many pettish replies and unkind returns to her unabated kindness; but attributing lady Monteith's obvious alteration of temper to her recent indisposition, she continued to pay her daily visits with undiminished regard.

The countess of Hartcourt, who fondly loved Rosaviva, had frequently remonstrated against her confining herself so entirely with lady Monteith; and having heard, with indignant contempt, the slanderous tales in circulation respecting her attachment and intrigue with lord Monteith, she now more than ever desired to render her visits less frequent, as the world, with its usual uncharitableness, had so maliciously construed her friendship for lady Monteith into a criminal passion for her husband.

Lady Rosaviva had mentioned a desire to see Westminster Abbey; and the countess of Hartcourt informed her, that she had made a party for the following morning to visit the tombs; to this arrangement Rosaviva gave a pleased assent, at the same time expressing the gratification it would afford her to examine the venerable pile. She then ordered her carriage, and went to pay her accustomed visit to lady Monteith, at whose door she gave instructions to her footman to return with the carriage at three o'clock. She found lady Monteith more placid than usual; her lord was reading to her, but on her entrance he closed the book; in the course of conversation, Rosaviva mentioned her engagement for the next morning, and the pleasure she expected.

Lord Monteith observed, that though so many years a resident in London, he had never yet examined the antiquities of Westminster Abbey, and would be happy to make one of the party, as there were many ancient monuments he had a curiosity to see.

Lady Monteith looked displeased ; she was surprised his curiosity had never been excited to visit the Abbey before ; and among the monuments, wondered if there were any to commemorate conjugal fidelity, as she was desirous of seeing one of that rare sort.

“ There are many monuments worthy of your notice, my love,” replied lord Monteith ; “ but at present your health is not sufficiently established to render such an excursion prudent. I would on no account allow you to venture on the fatigue, or suffer you to encounter the chill and damp always inseparable from churches.”

“ Your solicitude and care of my health is particularly kind,” replied lady Monteith, ironically ; “ I am really much indebted to your tenderness ; but I am not to be deceived, Monteith ; the company of a wife is seldom desired—in the morality of the present day, the presence of a wife is considered a tax on the pleasures of the husband.”

“ That is most unkindly suggested, Julia,” said lord Monteith ; “ you have never

had reason to suppose I prefer any company to yours."

"Never till of late," resumed lady Monteith, "and I have only myself to blame for having exposed you to the seduction of charms which have artfully estranged your affections from me, whose right they are by the most sacred of vows." As she spoke, she fixed her eyes on the astonished Rosaviva, with a look, the meaning of which could not be mistaken.

She stood aghast, while Monteith replied—"I do not understand you, Julia."

"Not understand me!" reiterated lady Monteith; "you are not usually dull of apprehension; I thought I had spoken plainly, and that your conscience would at once have applied my meaning."

"I am still bewildered and in the dark," said Monteith.

"Indeed!" resumed lady Monteith; "then, however painful the task, I feel it my duty to inform you, I am no longer to be imposed on by the pretended affection of my husband, or the assumed virtues of



my friend ; no, no, Monteith, you wish not me of your party to the Abbey, for when a man has discovered an object more attractive than his wife, he can certainly dispense with her company, whose presence would be a bar to his enjoyments with a dearer object."

The temper of Monteith did not forsake him, though he listened with grief and surprise to this groundless accusation ; lady Monteith, having disclosed the secret that rankled in her bosom, burst into tears, which her husband suffered to flow till the agony of passion subsided ; he then calmly asked her—" And whom, Julia, I beseech you tell me, whom do you accuse me of preferring to you ?"

" The reply to your question," said lady Monteith, " may be read in that seemingly-innocent countenance ;" turning to Rosaviva, who sat a pale and silent auditor of this unpleasant conversation ; " oh, would to Heaven that I had never seen it !"

" Just Heaven !" exclaimed Rosaviva, starting from her seat, " of what am I ac-

cused? what horrible guilt is imputed to me? Oh, lady Monteith, of what do you suspect me?"

"Suspect!" repeated lady Monteith; "I suspect nothing; unhappily for me, the proof is before my eyes; I read it in the coldness and unconcern of Monteith; it is confirmed by your guilty blushes."

"The blushes that burn my cheek," returned Rosaviva, "are not raised by guilt, but outraged innocence. Farewell, lady Monteith! I have not deserved this treatment at your hands; but I disdain reproach—from my soul I pity you; for, with such horrible suspicion on your mind, your sufferings must be far greater than mine, who have the consolation of innocence to support me against unmerited aspersion."

Having thus spoke, she hastily quitted the apartment, and on the staircase met her little favourites, Laurette Montalban and Elinor Monteith; the children, as usual, hung round her, and would have led her with them to the nursery, to see a new set of playthings the earl of Avondale had sent them; the artless affection of the children

forced tears to her eyes, as she excused herself from going with them to see their new baby-house ; pressing on their lips a farewell kiss, she would have passed on, but clinging to her, they asked her if she would see their playthings to-morrow ?

The tears rolled down her cheeks, as the idea that it was most probable she should visit them no more swelled in her bosom ; but conquering her emotion, she evaded their importunities, again pressed their rosy cheeks with her lips, and quitted the house.

For the first time in her life, Rosaviva was alone in the streets of London ; having sent home her own chariot, it was her intention to take a chair or coach ; but before she was fortunate enough to meet with either, the carriage of lady Gertrude Montalban passed her, and, as she believed, without recognising her, as it did not stop to offer her a seat ; but here she was mistaken—she was not only seen, but the strange circumstance of being alone, walking in the streets, spoke of with no very favourable comments.

The old dowager duchess Lutterel, and lady Mabel Macartney, two of the most censorious gossips in town, were in the carriage with lady Gertrude, and to them she pointed out lady Rosaviva de Molines, walking hastily along through a drizzling rain.

“Why, where, in the name of propriety,” said the old duchess, “can she be strutting? mighty odd truly! a person of her quality alone in the streets! why it is enough to make people talk.”

“Talk!” replied lady Mabel, with a sneer; “and what can the world talk of but her beauty, and her virtue, and her generosity? she is very charitable, you know, duchess, and probably is going to visit some person in want—to do some one an act of kindness privately.”

“Not unlikely,” replied lady Gertrude, “but her charity and liberality are become rather suspicious; the world will be hoodwinked no longer; all can see except poor lady Monteith, and her blindness is really wonderful.”

“Lady Monteith!” repeated the duchess, “bless me! why surely his lordship——”

“Is it possible,” interrupted lady Gertrude, “that you have heard nothing whispered—no hints dropped of the excessive friendship of lord Monteith and lady Rosaviva de Molines?”

“Not a sentence,” said the duchess.

“Is it possible,” resumed lady Gertrude, “that you have heard nothing concerning this innocent creature, who pretends such violent friendship for lady Monteith, to hide the infamous intrigue she is carrying on with her husband?”

“Bless me!” said lady Mabel, “is this true? why what a vile world we live in! this is the very first intimation I have had of the wicked affair.”

“It is, I fear, but too true,” rejoined lady Gertrude; “but as I am connected with lord Monteith’s family, I would on no account have my name mentioned in the business; though I promise you, I have many times of late been shocked at the hints thrown out in my presence against

the conduct of lady Rosaviva and lord Monteith."

"Well, it is very strange," observed lady Mabel, "that I should never hear a whisper of this intrigue; I understood from public report that she was in love with her cousin, lord Avondale."

"Ah, my dear madam!" returned lady Gertrude, "the goodness of your own heart makes you unsuspecting of the baseness of others; this report of her love for Avondale is a consummate piece of art, sent into circulation no doubt by herself, to prevent suspicion of her passion for Monteith."

"Very possible indeed," said the duchess; "there is a great deal of cunning to be read in the lines of her face; I have made Lavater my study, and am never deceived in a countenance."

Lady Gertrude turned hers aside, fearful that it would betray the baseness of her heart; and during the time the trio remained together, the innocent Rosaviva was accused of ingratitude, perfidy, and in-

continence. Lady Gertrude left these ladies, the duchess and lady Mabel, at a morning concert, and in the short space of two hours, it was currently reported that lady Rosaviva de Molines had been detected in going to an assignation with lord Monteith; this story, with a thousand embellishments and additions, was repeated in the hearing of the earl of Avondale, who, having severely reprobated the relator of the scandal, publicly declared his determination to spare no expence in discovering the inventor of so black a calumny, whom having found, he would punish with the utmost rigour of the law.

In extreme agitation he arrived at the countess of Hartcourt's, but the ladies not being either of them at home, he proceeded to lord Monteith's, to arrange with him some plans for clearing the injured fame of Rosaviva.

After encountering various insults in the streets from the vulgar persons she met, who had each of them a brutal observation, or a rude saying for her ear, not being able to obtain coach or chair, lady

Rosaviva at length reached home, not more fatigued with her walk than sick at heart; almost stifled with suppressed emotion, she hastily threw off her wet things, and having dismissed the wondering Isabella, whom she would not pain by informing of what had occurred, she repaired to her boudoir, and sinking on a couch, burst into an agony of tears—"This," said Rosaviva, "this is the world—this is friendship! alas! alas! why is my sincerity thus cruelly rewarded—why am I thus accused and basely calumniated?" Again she wept, and in her anguish of heart regretted having left Peru—"In the castle of my ancestors, at my own Deloricad, I had been safe from defamation," said Rosaviva; "oh, why did I forsake the ashes of my honoured parents—why did I quit my own attached people, to seek friends in a foreign country? Cruel lady Monteith! for this did I watch your sickbed, heedless of my own rest and comfort—alas! alas! what enemy to us both has thus abused your ear, thus basely slandered me!"



Turning her tearful eyes towards heaven, she continued—"Oh my sainted parents, to you my innocence is known; hover over your calumniated Rosaviva! great have been my trials, and heavy the afflictions I have borne.; more dreadful sufferings yet, I fear, are destined me; support and strengthen me to bear calamity—enable me to despise this slander of my reputation!"

At this moment, while her tears fell on her upraised hands, lord Monteith stood before her—"Dare I approach you, lovely, injured excellence?" said he.

Rosaviva started, and waving her white hand, would have fled his presence; but with a look of agony he entreated her to remain and hear him. Lady Rosaviva, unable to speak, pointed to a seat, but unheeding her action, he said—"After the frantic behaviour of the deluded Julia, I blush, lady Rosaviva, to approach you; I can scarce hope or expect you to listen with patience to the apology I am deputed to convey; yet the erring, the deceived Julia is entitled to your pity, for she has been made the dupe of some designing

wretch, who, envious of the blessing she enjoyed in your friendship, has by anonymous accusations laboured to destroy, with your reputation, our domestic peace."

"Oh, how," exclaimed Rosaviva, "how have I deserved an enemy?"

"By being lovely and amiable," replied lord Monteith; "had you been less transcendent in beauty, less eminent in virtue, the bolts of envy and slander had passed you by unheeded."

The compliment of lord Monteith was lost on the sorrowing heart of Rosaviva, who dwelling on the injury she had met, said—"I loved lady Monteith with the true affection of a sister; she might have demanded from me the sacrifice of my fortune—nay, of my life; and she has wounded the bosom of her friend; she has insulted, accused, calumniated me; alas! alas! was there none in the wide world to murder my reputation, but her on whom my heart leaned in perfect confidence?"

"She sends me here," returned Monteith, "to solicit your forgiveness, to tell

you her own heart reproaches her injustice more severely than your resentment can desire; Julia has, I am sensible, given you cause for displeasure, but she weeps the tears of repentance."

"And I," said Rosaviva, "weep my injured reputation."

"Love for the father of her children," resumed lord Monteith, "made Julia unjust and ungrateful to her friend; but convinced of the injury she has done you by her unkind suspicion, she deposes me to supplicate your pardon, of which she will never be convinced but by your return to —"

"That request is made in vain," interrupted Rosaviva; "lady Monteith has my pity and my forgiveness, but I can never consent to expose myself to a repetition of the insult I received this day; no, my lord, it cannot be; lady Monteith has my sincere wishes for her future happiness, but the mind which jealousy has once inflamed will, I fear, be ever subject to the malady; for the peace of lady Monteith,

as well as out of respect to my own fame, I am compelled to decline any further intimacy."

"If I bear to her this reply, it will break her heart," returned lord Monteith; "pardon me, lady Rosaviva, if I entreat you for your own sake to relent—suffer me to lead you to the penitent Julia."

"For my own sake!" repeated Rosaviva; "that expression, my lord, requires explanation."

"Alas! how little you are acquainted with the world!" said Monteith; "your innocence foresees not the malicious tales that will arise from the breaking off your intimacy with lady Monteith; on my knees let me entreat you to recede from your resolve; let my poor, erring Julia hear your own lips pronounce forgiveness of the fault of love."

As lord Monteith knelt in supplication at the feet of the weeping, relenting Rosaviva, the door of the boudoir opened, and lady Gertrude Montalban, the earl of Avondale, the old duchess Lutterel, lady Mabel

Macartney, and the countess of Hartcourt, entered.

“ Lord Monteith on his knees to lady Rosaviva de Molines !” said lady Gertrude, affecting surprise, but at the same time malignant pleasure sparkling in her eyes ; “ lord Monteith at the feet of lady Rosaviva de Molines, making love !”

“ No, madam,” replied lord Monteith ; “ I deny your inference, though I am not at liberty to make a public disclosure of the motives of my subjection.”

“ Why, I protest and vow,” said lady Mabel, “ I heard your lordship say something about the fault of love ; and certainly a great and heinous fault it must be in you, a married man, to be talking about love to any one except your own wife ; I bless my stars I am not married—fie upon the profligacy of the age ! a faithful husband is not to be found !”

“ Poor lady Monteith, she is much to be pitied,” said the duchess ; “ and as for those unprincipled females who encourage the advances of married men, they ought to be shunned and despised.”

“ Every person of honourable mind must have the same opinion,” remarked the countess of Hartcourt.

“ Your lordship appears unwell,” said lady Gertrude, turning to the agonized Avondale; “ will you accept my *eau-de-luce* ?”

But he heard her not; his mind was tortured by the passing scene, yet it altered not his respect or his affection; and perceiving Rosaviva pale and agitated, he flew to support her.

“ To you,” said lord Monteith, replying to an ill-natured remark of lady Mabel’s, “ that love scenes were in general very interesting and pathetic, “ to you who delight in scandal, and feel no pleasure equal to that of destroying the peace of families, by propagating falsehoods—to you I shall not condescend to enter into further explanation than to say, angels are not more pure and chaste than lady Rosaviva de Molines.”

Lady Mabel and lady Gertrude threw in each other a glance of incredulity,

while, addressing the distressed Avondale, lord Monteith resumed—"To you, Avondale, whose mind I know superior to base suspicion, I am ready, at any moment, to account for the kneeling posture in which you surprised me ; with you, madam, I request to speak alone."

The countess of Hartcourt, though reluctant to leave the side of the still-weeping Rosaviva, suffered him to lead her from the boudoir to an adjoining apartment, where he removed every unpleasant feeling from her mind, by clearly and ingenuously accounting for the awkward situation in which he had been discovered with lady Rosaviva.

In the meantime, lady Gertrude, perceiving herself of no consequence in the passing scene, and that all the attention of Avondale was taken up in soothing Rosaviva, acted an hysteric with much skill and effect ; from which being, after much trouble, recovered by the joint efforts of the duchess and lady Mabel, she professed herself most unhappy in having witnessed a circumstance so distressing as the un-

equivocal posture of lord Monteith, in whose family concerns she was deeply interested—"I am grieved," continued she, "for all parties, and know not which is most entitled to pity, lady Monteith or lady Rosaviva de Molines."

"For me, madam," said Rosaviva, rising with dignity, "I neither merit nor desire your pity; nor could any circumstance of my life be to me so debasing, as to become an object of your commiseration. Avondale, my friend, I wish not to sink in your estimation; it is not possible that you believe me guilty, for the virtuous and the noble judge of others by themselves; look into your own heart—you will there read the acquittal of Rosaviva;" having so said, she withdrew.

The dejected countenance of Avondale brightened; his heart did acquit her; he felt she was chaste as innocence, and worthy of his affection; without attending to the sarcastic comments of the duchess, or lady Gertrude's affected sorrow for lady Monteith, he also withdrew, without even attending to the ceremony of wishing them



a good morning. He flew to his friend, the countess, to obtain from her the solution which he supposed Monteith had given of the mysterious scene, which, he nothing doubted, would be repeated over the town with many malevolent additions.

Lady Gertrude Montalban, exulting in the disgrace, which she hoped would now involve the fame of Rosaviva—a disgrace which she imagined must put an end to the earl of Avondale's intention of marrying her, was about, with her friends, to quit the house, when in crossing the hall, they encountered Avondale and lord Monteith arm-in-arm.

Lady Gertrude started as if she had trod on a serpent, for in this apparent amity, she read the defeat of her scheme.

Lord Monteith addressed the trio, in no very gentle terms; he warned them against propagating malevolent tales against the reputation of lady Rosaviva de Molines.

The duchess replied, that she thought his warning very unnecessary to persons of their rank, particularly as they were the intimate friends of both parties.

“There is no word,” returned Monteith, “more prostituted than friendship; it is the friends who are admitted into your family circle who poison all domestic peace—they abuse your confidence—they sow the seeds of discord—they infuse jealous suspicion—it is these friends who spread abroad defamatory tales.”

“From such friends,” said Avondale, “may Heaven preserve the lovely, innocent Rosaviva!”

## CHAPTER II.



“ Ah, who can tell, though bright the morning wake,  
What glooms shall dim the glories of the day !  
What tempest from the icy North shall break,  
To sweep the blossoms of the grove away !

“ Or who shall tell, while joy illumines the soul,  
What dire event comes wing'd by vengeful fate !  
What tow'ring spirits in the dust may roll,  
Victims of love, of jealousy, or hate !”

.....

“ My prophetic soul doth augur ill of this night's masquerading.”

THE heart of lady Rosaviva de Molines had been severely wounded by the unjust and unkind suspicion of lady Monteith, to whom her judgment and her feelings had given a preference above all her other friends; artless, innocent, and new to the deceits, the envy, and stratagems of life, she looked on the world with disgust and horror, where the most virtuous were not free from the shafts of calumny; and where

all ranks of people seemed more ready to believe evil against, than to give each other credit for virtuous actions; a thousand times she wished that she had never left her native Peru; and it was not without much earnest persuasion, that she gave up to the entreaties of the countess of Hartcourt, and the earl of Avondale, her desire of departing with the first ships for America.

Oppressed with penitential sorrow, lady Monteith sought the presence of the injured Rosaviva, whose insulted pride was softened by the tears and distress of a friend whom she had not ceased to regard, though her want of confidence in her honour had given her just reason to be offended.

Foreseeing that a breach between Rosaviva and lady Monteith would seem in the public eye a confirmation of the scandalous tales in circulation, lady Hartcourt aided with all her power the excuses made by lady Monteith in extenuation of her conduct; and to the joy of all parties, a reconciliation took place.

With her peace of mind, the health of

lady Monteith became confirmed ; and the appearance of the fair friends together in public, fully contradicted the reports so industriously spread abroad by lady Gertrude Montalban, who read in their reunion the ill-success of her plan ; the chilling politeness too with which she was treated by both parties, gave her reason to suppose that she was suspected for the author of the anonymous letters which had given the earl of Avondale and lady Monteith so much pain ; but having admitted no one to a participation of her secret, she consoled herself with the certainty of their not being able to convict her of this baseness.

The marquis of Feversham, though rejected by Rosaviva, gave not up the hope of persuading her to accept his hand ; youth is sanguine, and easily led to believe what it wishes ; he fancied it possible to win her, by giving splendid entertainments, and gain her heart through the allurements of pleasure ; to this intent, he got his mother, the duchess of Winterton, to announce a masquerade at her magnifi-

cent mansion in Berkley-square, to which all the rank and fashion of the metropolis were invited.

Lady Rosaviva would have declined an intimacy with the duchess of Winterton, but she was a particular friend of the countess of Hartcourt's, and it was impossible for her to refuse being at her entertainment, as the earl of Avondale and the countess both seemed to anticipate the pleasures of the night.

This masquerade again set the prolific brain of lady Gertrude at work; this sort of entertainment frequently afforded opportunity for disclosures, and brought about discoveries; turning the invitation ticket she had just received about in her fingers, she said to the count de Syllaric—"This entertainment, I suspect, is designed to entrap the heart of lady Rosaviva de Molines."

"She is very beautiful," returned the count—"I envy from my soul the happiness of him who shall obtain her hand."

"In the dance. I presume, you mean,"

said lady Gertrude, "as I have often heard you express dislike of matrimony."

"Lady Rosaviva de Molines has charms to convert me," answered the count.

"That is to say," replied lady Gertrude, "her gold would gild and render the nauseous pill, matrimony, palatable."

"He will be fortunate," said the count, "who obtains the treasure of her beauty."

"The treasure of her beauty! nonsense, folly!" resumed lady Gertrude; "the treasure of her wealth you mean: come, come, count, I know you have more sense, more solid wisdom, than to be captivated by a pink and white complexion; lady Rosaviva de Molines is immensely rich, and he who marries her may live like a sovereign prince on her domains in South America."

"To me all countries would be alike," said the count; "she is indeed a treasure; what a lucky chance for him who wins her!"

"That lucky chance may be yours," replied lady Gertrude, "if you have courage to achieve it."

“ In another a doubt of my courage might be pardonable,” said de Syllaric, “ but in your opinion it ought to be established.”

“ Hush !” replied lady Gertrude, “ hush, de Syllaric ! not so loud ; lady Rosaviva is doubtless to be won.”

“ Why, she is a woman, and may be wooed ; she is a widow, and may be won,” returned the count ; “ but she will not listen to my wooing, consequently will not be won by me.”

“ Yes, she shall be won by you,” resumed lady Gertrude, “ if you will be instructed by me and follow my teaching ; the stake is rich and requires some hazard.”

“ You raise my hopes and my curiosity,” said de Syllaric.

“ Will you be secret ? will you be taught ?” asked lady Gertrude.

“ Hitherto you have found me apt,” replied the count, “ and secret too ; for who has ever heard that at——”

“ Silence !” whispered lady Gertrude, with a look of alarm, “ some one approaches.”



“Merely your fancy, I believe,” said the count, walking on tiptoe to the door, and listening.

“We will speak on this matter at a fitter time,” returned lady Gertrude; “at night, when all are retired, come to my dressing-room; I will there lay down a plan, which, if you have courage to pursue, shall give you all you wish.”

The count de Syllaric smiled—“Beauty and wealth!” said he, “in these two little words are comprised all I wish. Adieu! an hour after midnight I will not fail your assignation.”

The count having departed, lady Gertrude ordered her carriage to the house of madame Saillons, a celebrated masquerade dressmaker; the Frenchwoman, with all the servile obsequiousness of her country, waited to take the orders of lady Gertrude, whose eyes were wandering over the fantastic dresses, which in every form and colour were hung round the room; at length they rested on a Moorish dress, of gold embroidered taffeta, that lay apart, on the

cinar of which madame Saillons was sewing a deep and splendid gold fringe.

“This is a beautiful dress,” said lady Gertrude.

“It be for von beautiful lady,” returned the Frenchwoman.

“May I ask,” said lady Gertrude, “who the lady is?”

“It is von great secret,” replied madame Saillons, smiling, and shewing her broad white teeth; “I give de vord of honour not to speak.”

Lady Gertrude slipped a banknote between her fingers—“But you did not promise not to write the lady’s name,” said she; “that will not be breaking your word of honour.”

Madame Saillons, satisfied with a subterfuge agreeable to her interest, laughed, and exclaimed—“Good, ver good; ma lady have ver much wit.” She then took up a pen, and wrote lady Rosaviva de Molines; she then informed lady Gertrude, that the earl of Avondale’s dress was Moorish also, lord and lady Monteith’s Spanish,

and that of the countess of Hartcourt a duenna.

Lady Gertrude gave orders for a dress in every particular the same as lady Rosaviva's; she also ordered a Spanish dress the same as lady Monteith's, and a large domino.

At the appointed time, an hour past midnight, the count de Syllaric was admitted to the dressing-room of lady Gertrude Montalban, who having explained her plan, suggested for insuring its success some necessary acts, which were not exactly approved by the count; but circumstances had placed him in some measure in the power of lady Gertrude, and he was compelled to assume an acquiescence with what his soul revolted from; though at the same time her plausible arguments had the effect of convincing him that all things were possible to a man determined not to let the admonitions of a scrupulous conscience deter him from the accomplishment of his purposes: two long hours were spent in this conference, and whatever was

the plan laid down at that nocturnal meeting, or the counsels given by lady Gertrude, the count swore to follow her advice and perform her instructions; but his oath was not made without mental reservation, for he clearly perceived that under the appearance of promoting his interest, her own gratification and security were the motives that inspired her zeal; at present, however, lady Gertrude was useful to him, and he found it necessary to yield unqualified assent to all she proposed.

The earl of Avondale had seen Rosaviva reject several lovers, and as he considered their merits and advantages, his timidity increased; neither vain nor arrogant, he saw no chance of success for himself, while he considered she had refused men who possessed every requisite to win regard and obtain acceptance.

“The masquerade,” said the countess, “will afford you an opportunity of declaring your love; I trust the advice I give you will be fortunate.”

To the masquerade the noble Avondale looked forward with impatience—“It shall

decide my fate," said he; "I will declare my wishes to Rosaviva, and from that night will date my happiness or misery."

Rosaviva remembered the splendid entertainments given by the marquis de Baldivia at Lima and Potosi; these recollections brought with them a sadness that hung so heavily on her spirits, that while Isabella gracefully folded and disposed the brilliant silver-tissue veil that half-concealed the redundance of her glossy tresses, she pressed her hands on her bosom, that sparkled with diamonds, and sighing mournfully, said—"I have no pleasure in this preparation; I promise myself no diversion, and wish the night was passed; for I feel I know not what of sad presage, that makes me wish I could excuse myself from going to this masquerade."

"Dear lady, do not go then," replied Isabella; "why should you do violence to your own inclination? let me hasten to the dressing-room of the countess, and tell her you have changed your mind."

"I would not for the world," returned Rosaviva, "be thought so capricious; the

earl of Avondale has engaged four of his friends to meet us in the Moorish costume; I am obliged to go—if I decline, it will break up the party; the countess, and lady Monteith too, promise themselves so much entertainment—while I—but I will conquer this superstitious sadness—I will be cheerful;” but another heavy sigh contradicted her words; and Isabella gazing on her in alarm, expressed a fear that she was unwell.

“ I am only sick,” replied Rosaviva, with a faint smile; “ be not alarmed, my kind Isabella; I think of former days, and the remembrance brings with it buried friends and past afflictions; but I will try to rouse my flagging spirits—I would on no account damp the pleasure of my friends by this unseasonable sadness.”

Isabella, when dismissed, repeated this conversation to her husband; and when Walter saw lady Rosaviva cross the hall, led by the earl of Avondale to her carriage, he said—“ Our dear lady will be much admired to-night, for she looks more beauti-

ful than ever ; but for all that, I wish she was not going to this masquerade."

"Thou art a simpleton," returned Isabella, gazing with a look of pleasure after Rosaviva ; "never did a dress more become her elegant figure ; there will be no lady half as lovely as herself at the masquerade ; no, nor, I am certain, none half as amiable."

"I know it," said Walter ; "and for that very reason I wish she was not going—I am afraid that some accident will happen."

"Accident !" repeated Isabella ; "you do wrong, Walter, to put such notions in my head—accident ! no, no ! I trust no accident will happen."

"I trust so too," said Walter ; "but for all that, I wish she had not gone."

The duchess of Winterton, without a mask, received her guests, and had the unspeakable delight to see her rooms crowded by groups of characters, who appeared to meet with the determination to exercise, to the fullest extent, whatever wit and ta-

lent they possessed for the general entertainment.

The marquis of Feversham and his sister, with her lover, the earl of Carrickford, and the honourable Misses Athold, habited in Moorish costume, were ready to receive lady Rosaviva; and having joined the countess of Hartcourt's party, attracted much attention.

As they passed along the grand saloon, which was fitted up in a style of peculiar elegance, and prepared for dancing, some person whispered, close at lady Monteith's ear—"Are you cured of jealousy, or are you resolved to exercise the law of retaliation?"

Lady Monteith hastily turned round, but a crowd pressed after her, and it was utterly impossible even to guess at the speaker. The sound of cymbals were now heard, and the soft tinkling of castanets; the Moorish party had formed themselves to dance, among which, conspicuous for the splendour of their habits, stood Avondale and Rosaviva; the arm of lady Mon-



teith was passed under her lord's, as, with the countess of Hartcourt, they stood to witness the graceful evolutions of a Moorish dance.

A black domino, who stood next to lady Monteith, in a squeaking voice, said—  
“ Our feelings are often betrayed by our actions; you do right to hold the faithless man by the arm; a wife indeed ought to have the eyes of Argus, or the wiles of a pretended friend may seduce her husband. Sweet simpleton, how you have been gulled! but the holding a man so tightly by the arm will avail but little, if his heart is given to wandering.”

This speech was not heard by lord Monteith, whose attention was entirely engrossed by the dancers; lady Monteith, in much agitation, gazed on the speaker; but the folds of the domino, the mask, and disguised voice, baffled her desire of discovery.

“ See,” resumed her tormentor, “ how Monteith's eyes follow the agile steps of lady Rosaviva de Molines; simple Julia, you grasp the arm of your husband, but his heart——”

“Is truly mine,” said lady Monteith; “who are you who thus dare to insinuate a suspicion of his honour?”

“I am your friend,” replied the mask, “and if you will bring the countess of Hartcourt to the pavilion, I will not only shew you my face, but convince you, that in lady Rosaviva you cherish a serpent that stings your peace.”

“Who are you?” repeated lady Monteith.

“That you can only learn by following me to the pavilion; let go the arm of him who deceives you, bring the countess of Hartcourt with you—I go instantly to the pavilion; you will find me seated under the famous picture that represents the jealous Dejanira sending to Hercules the poisoned shirt.”

The domino now walked away, and lady Monteith withdrawing her arm from under her lord’s, moved to the side of the countess of Hartcourt, to whom she repeated the conversation she had been engaged in. The countess saw with pain that she was disturbed, and with the hope of de-

tecting the vile incendiary, consented to go with her to the pavilion, certain of the innocence of Rosaviva, and burning with indignation against the person, who, under the security of a mask, had presumed to utter such base insinuations.

The countess of Hartcourt wished to inform lord Monteith of the circumstance, considering this some fresh plan against the reputation of Rosaviva; but lady Monteith recollecting with terror his late duel, strongly opposed the intention of the countess, lest the knowledge might involve him in a fresh quarrel, and again put his life in danger. The jealousy of lady Monteith was not entirely eradicated, and she urged the countess to accompany her to the pavilion, who, against her better judgment, suffered herself to be persuaded; and without speaking to lord Monteith, they hastened to hear the disclosure promised by the black domino; as they retreated, an astrologer approached, and offered to draw the horoscope of lord Monteith; the voice of the astrologer was not strange, but lord Monteith could not recall the recollection

of where he could have heard it, or to whom it belonged; and with much pleasantry he ridiculed the learned jargon of the astrologer, who talked of celestial ascendancies and planetary influences, till lord Monteith assured him, he was already well satisfied with his fortune, and acquainted with his fate.

“But there are secrets in my power,” said the astrologer, “which, indifferent as you appear to future occurrences, you would like to learn; at present you are unacquainted with the name of the person who placed in lady Monteith’s dressing-room the letters that gave her a fit of jealousy; doubtless you would be pleased to know your enemy.”

“In that idea,” said lord Monteith, “you are correct; I would with pleasure give a hundred guineas to discover the base contriver of those letters, written to destroy the fame of a most virtuous lady, and murder my domestic peace.”

“You offer generously,” returned the astrologer, “but this is neither time nor place.”

“Every place and any time,” resumed lord Monteith, “are proper to discover villany, and do an act of justice.”

“You have ridiculed and despised my art,” returned the astrologer, “yet my knowledge in occult science might have assisted you in this desired event; as it is, my knowledge rests in my own bosom.”

He was then moving away, but the curiosity of Monteith being awakened, he said—“Stay and answer me.”

“What would you know?” demanded the astrologer.

“I would know,” said Monteith, “whether you are serious in saying you can give me information in this affair.”

“Yes,” answered the astrologer, “I am really serious; my art teaches me to penetrate the most hidden secrets, not only this you are now anxious about, but others of great importance to your future peace.”

Monteith felt ashamed of the burning curiosity that possessed him, yet he continued to listen, while the astrologer resumed—“I can bring you to the person by whom those anonymous letters were

written, who not having been rewarded according to expectation, is ready to make disclosures that deeply concern you, and involve the peace of your family."

"This is strange," said Monteith.

"Yet no less true," returned the astrologer; "and if you wish to be satisfied, I will lead you to conviction of your secret enemy." The astrologer waved his wand, and pressed through the crowd that circled round the dancers.

Determined, if possible, to get at the bottom of a fabrication so injurious to the reputation of lady Rosaviva de Molines, and so destructive to lady Monteith's felicity, yielding to his irritated feelings, lord Monteith followed the astrologer to the hall of entrance—"Whither do you lead me?" said he, observing the astrologer about to quit the house.

"To an important discovery," replied the astrologer; "but if you have no curiosity to discover the defamer of lady Rosaviva de Molines, to drag to light the deadly enemy of your repose, remain here and

take your pleasure, while others weave a mask of villany. Adieu, lord Monteith! when the bolt falls, say not you were not warned to avoid it; I have offered you my services; hereafter you will bitterly repent you did not accept them."

"If I hesitate," returned Monteith, "if I demur to accept them, it is because they are mysteriously offered, and I doubt the propriety of listening to the communications of a stranger; if you indeed mean me, as you say, well, why not unmask, and shew me to whose kindness I am to be indebted?"

"Not here," said the astrologer, "not here; I cannot here remove my mask, nor is this the place for explanations such as I would make; I would have secured you from the evil effects of future machinations, by disclosing to you an implacable enemy; but it appears, though curious to be informed, you hesitate to follow me. Once more I say farewell—enjoy the few transient moments of happiness that may yet remain to you. Farewell, lord Mon-

teith ; hereafter you will wish you had possessed courage to follow me."

" Courage !" repeated lord Monteith, indignantly ; " whoever you are, presume not to question my courage."

" The courage to face an enemy in the field," said the astrologer, " and the courage necessary to hunt out the secret lair of an unknown and unsuspected foe, are of a different species."

" Proceed—I will follow you," replied lord Monteith ; " you shall find I have the courage necessary to see the end of this adventure."

The astrologer passed hastily into the square, closely followed by lord Monteith ; on a sign made by the astrologer, the step of a carriage was let down, into which they both entered ; and lord Monteith was shortly after let into a secret, of which he had not entertained the least suspicion.

The Morisco dance being concluded, lady Rosaviva, with her Moorish party, withdrew to an inner apartment, where, being seated, the earl of Avondale and the marquis of Feversham went to order re-



freshments; but in the next instant the earl of Avondale returned, and taking Rosaviva's hand, said—"Be not alarmed; the countess of Hartcourt is taken unwell, and is now going to her carriage."

"Unwell!" repeated Rosaviva in alarm, "and going home alone! pray lead me to her." She then made a hasty apology to lady Louisa Feversham, and gracefully bending to the rest of the party, she suffered the earl of Avondale to place her arm under his, and lead her away.

The announcing of supper occasioned much bustle and confusion—dances were broken off, and songs left unfinished, while the company pressed forward to the banqueting-hall, to witness a display of delicacies equally acceptable to the glutton and the epicure. The tables were all served with gold plate, and laid out in a style of profusion and magnificence, that while the feast did honour to the taste and hospitality of the entertainer, it produced astonishment and delight in the guests, for nature and art combined with each other to excite the appetite and gratify the senses.

The earl of Avondale, on his return with the marquis of Feversham, followed by a servant with refreshments, was not a little surprised to find his party dispersed, and the apartment nearly deserted; but supposing lady Rosaviva had been joined by the countess of Hartcourt and lady Monteith, he was proceeding to the banqueting-hall in search of them, when he was stoppéd under an arcade by three masks, habited as Macbeth's weird sisters, whom he would have passed without comment, had not the first laid her thin arm across his, and said—"Hail to thee, Willoughby de Grey, earl of Avondale!" She then moved forward, and the second taking up her tone, addressed him with—"Hail to thee, earl of Avondale! hail to thee, constant lover of a frail and faithless dame!" She then passed him, and the third advancing, said—"Hail to thee, Willoughby de Grey, earl of Avondale! hail to thee, man of honourable heart, whom fate ordains to suffer by dishonour!" The weird sisters then joined hands, and with strange antics danced round him, repeating these words—

“Toil and trouble are your due,  
Toil and trouble are for you;  
Till you burst the false one’s chain,  
Toil and trouble shall remain.”

The beldams then set up a hideous shout, and making frightful grimaces, left him.

The mind of Avondale felt only contempt for their prophecy, believing it the rancorous effusion of base hearts, that envied the charms and virtues of Rosaviva; but much as he despised, he yet felt uneasy; the pleasure he had promised himself at this masquerade, the disclosure he intended making of his love, seemed alike fated to disappointment; but the present was no moment for reflection or regret, and he again moved towards the banquetting-hall; to gain this, he had to cross a gallery of some extent, now nearly deserted by the motley groups of masks, and without further interruption he had gained the middle, when he beheld a sight that made him start—Monteith and Rosaviva in earnest conversation, his arm encircling her waist; the blood indignantly mounted

to the face of Avondale, as he surveyed this familiarity; he hurried forward to meet them, but suddenly they turned into another passage, as if purposely to avoid him; not more offended than astonished at this strange conduct, the earl looked down the passage, and perceived it terminated in a flight of stairs; the objects of his pursuit were out of sight, but he descended the stairs, and found they led to the banquetting-hall also, to which another flight of steps conducted; supposing Monteith and Rosaviva had gone thither, he made his way to the middle of the hall, where he stood and cast round an inquiring glance on the company, but could nowhere perceive the parties he was in search of; at the upper end of the hall he discovered the countess of Hartcourt and lady Monteith, to whom, after much difficulty, he made his way.

At the same moment the countess inquired for Rosaviva, and lady Monteith asked if he had seen her lord?

To both their interrogations he replied —“ I expected to meet them with you.”

The countess saw in his manner that something unpleasant had occurred, but remembering, with her accustomed prudence, how they were surrounded, she restrained her curiosity and remained silent; but lady Monteith, whom the conversation of the black domino had again made suspicious and uneasy, pursuing the subject next her heart, said—"It is very strange that lady Rosaviva, always so scrupulous and timid, should in a place like this have left your protection, and that Monteith should also be absent."

"No doubt the lady and gentleman are protecting each other," said a Falstaff, shaking his fat sides at what he thought wit.

"They are together; I saw them," exclaimed lord Fortescue, puffing and blowing with the violent exertion he had made to reach the earl of Avondale, who, mad with vexation, would, if possible, have silenced the inquiries of lady Monteith, who repeatedly asked—"Who are together? whom did you see?"

"Why, colonel Sligo, and the honcur-

able Miss Caroline Amelia Athold," said lord Fortescue; "she has jilted me fairly."

"Fairly!" replied the earl of Avondale, happy to talk of any thing or any body, except Rosaviva and Monteith; "unfairly I should suppose, if she has jilted you."

"I saw her in a postchaise with Sligo," resumed lord Fortescue; "crack—whip—off they go for Gretna-Green; now, as Romeo says, will I incontinently go hang myself."

"Roderigo you mean," said Falstaff; "but if you will take my advice, you had better take a glass of sack."

"Well advised, lean Jack; I shall then be completely primed for frolic," replied Fortescue; "and first I must try my luck at raising a subscription."

"For what?" asked the earl of Avondale.

"Why, I made my way to you at the expence of my harlequin jacket," returned Fortescue, laughing; "look at me—did you ever see such a tatterdemalion?" at the same time spinning round on his heel, and shewing his jacket, which was almost torn

from his back; "though, by-the-bye, I have not much opinion of my oratorical powers, for I asked Monteith to give me a trifle to repair my tatters, and he answered my humble petition with as stately and repulsive a waving of his hand, as any Spanish don ever silenced an unfortunate beggar with."

"Lord Monteith! when—where? tell me where did you see him?" said lady Monteith.

"It must have been an age since Fortescue saw him," replied sir George Lacy, pushing himself between lord Fortescue and lady Monteith; "I saw him not five minutes since."

"Saw who?" asked lord Fortescue.

"Why, Monteith," answered sir George; "were you not speaking of him? I saw him getting into a hackney-coach with a lady in a Moorish dress."

"Impossible!" said the earl of Avondale.

"You certainly must have been mistaken, sir George," said the countess of Hartcourt.

“No! ’pon my soul and honour, I am perfectly correct in this statement,” returned the little baronet; “it is utterly impossible I could be mistaken; they appeared in a devilish hurry though; but I spoke to Monteith, and he returned my salutation.”

“Still you will pardon if I doubt,” said Avondale.

“Oh certainly,” replied sir George, wrapping his pink satin domino round his arm; “you are at perfect liberty to doubt as much as you think proper; but on my own part, I beg to observe, my intellects being quite clear, I am ready to swear I saw them—I could not be deceived.”

“Oh, no, no!” said lady Monteith, with evident agitation, “I only have been deceived.”

“The gentleman’s dress,” resumed sir George, “was a blue Spanish habit, a large diamond star in his hat.”

“Your description is perfectly correct,” said lady Monteith; “too surely it was Monteith you saw.”



“Of that,” returned the baronet, “I was quite clear; I was certain it was my friend Monteith; but the lady in the Moorish habit, all bells, and silver, and fringes, I could not guess at; perhaps,” addressing lady Monteith, “your ladyship can assist my ignorance in this particular.”

“Of this,” said lady Monteith, “unfortunately I am but too capable; the lady who accompanied lord Monteith professed herself my friend—oh, yes,” continued she, bursting into tears, “I am fatally convinced there could be but one person capable of this vile, this treacherous conduct towards me—the wretched companion of lord Monteith is——”

“Beware,” interrupted the earl of Avondale, in extreme agitation; “beware of profaning a name, which, in spite of appearances, I believe to belong to the most virtuous, as well as most lovely of her sex.”

“Of her beauty,” replied sir George, staggering against Fortescue, “of her beauty I wish Monteith joy; as to her virtue, I suppose he can dispense with that.”

“Have a care, sir,” said Avondale, warm-

ly; “presume not to think lightly of a lady whose——”

“Think!” interrupted the baronet, “that is a high joke, faith! who can prevent my thinking that if a lovely woman, when it is as dark as the grave, consents to be shut up in a hackney-coach with me—but never mind that—all I say is, Monteith is a lucky fellow! why, how queer you all look! who the devil is this lady with the bells and the fringes?”

“You perceive,” said lord Fortescue, feeling for the distress of lady Monteith, “that sir George has made copious libations to the jolly god, and may have fancied what in reality never took place.”

“You are right,” rejoined Avondale, willing to cling to the faintest hope that would exonerate Rosaviva from the imputation of frailty and treachery; “sir George must have been deceived; I will again stroll through the rooms, and shall no doubt meet the refutation of sir George’s fancy.”

“No, you won’t; ’pon my soul and ho-

nour, Monteith is off with a fair Moor, or may I never swallow another jelly !”

Sir George, as he spoke, seated himself at the table, and drawing towards him a superb glass-stand loaded with syllabubs, ices, and jellies, upset the whole with a tremendous smash ; the confusion this accident occasioned made the company hastily quit the hall ; among the first to retreat were the countess of Hartcourt and lady Monteith, who accepted the assistance of lord Fortescue to see them safe to their carriage, while the earl of Avondale again explored the rooms, which were beginning to thin of company. In the saloon he found the marquis of Feversham and his sister, who were consoling the honourable Miss Athold on the elopement of her sister with colonel Sligo, a man much beneath her in rank and family.

Here the unhappy Avondale met fresh cause for perplexity and uneasiness, in being told that they had believed lady Rosaviva de Molines gone home, as he himself had in their hearing informed her,

that the countess of Hartcourt had been taken ill, and had himself conducted her from their presence to the countess.

The earl of Avondale appealed to the marquis of Feversham, who immediately confirmed his declaration, that they had been together from the conclusion of the dance till they returned with refreshments, and to their disappointment found the party gone.

It was now evident to Avondale that some villanous stratagem had deceived Rosaviva, in which opinion the marquis of Feversham joined, who, in this night's adventure, saw the total annihilation of all his hopes, being convinced his family would proudly reject an alliance with a female whose reputation was placed in dispute. Monteith had not been seen since the early part of the night, but the heart of Avondale refused to believe him a villain, or to implicate him in the mysterious transaction which menaced the utter ruin of lady Rosaviva's fame.

In the utmost distress and distraction of mind, lady Monteith returned home, con-

vinced that her faithless husband had eloped with her equally-faithless friend—"My children, my unhappy babes!" said she, wringing her hands, "your inhuman father abandons us."

Unable to sleep, she resisted the entreaties of her woman, and refused to go to bed; the image of despair, she sat at the window listening to the distant sounds of wheels, as they passed from the fatal masquerade: at length a hackney-coach stopped at the door, and shrieking with joy, she exclaimed—"It is Monteith!" but another moment contradicted this hope; it was the earl of Avondale, who had been among the hackney-coachmen, to gain intelligence, if possible, of the fugitives; but totally unsuccessful, he had merely called to inquire after lady Monteith; she had fully expected to see her husband descend from the hackney-coach, but when Avondale stood before her, the disappointment was too much for her spirits; she cast on him a despairing look, and sunk back fainting on her chair. Avondale waited to see her restored to sense; he then advised her

being immediately put to bed, and departed with a heart torn with anguish, pitying the wretched wife, yet still refusing to think dishonourably of the husband.

In addition to her own distress, the countess of Hartcourt had much to bear from the wild sorrow of Walter and Isabella, who were not to be consoled for the mistress on whom their affectionate hearts doted. In a state of the utmost alarm, the countess waited the appearance of Avondale, well aware that before he returned home he would call on her. More than two hours were passed by the countess, in vain attempts to sooth the fears of the afflicted Africans, who, in the uncertainty of Rosaviva's fate, pictured to themselves her being involved in evils of the most black and terrible nature; Isabella remembered how unwilling lady Rosaviva was to go to the masquerade, and Walter, his own prophetic feelings when he saw her cross the hall with the earl of Avondale, and his repeated wish that she should remain at home.

It was near eight o'clock in the morning, when a loud knock at the street-door made the countess hurry to the hall, in the hope that some intelligence had arrived; it was the earl of Avondale, pale and dejected; he followed her to the apartment where she had ordered breakfast to be prepared; for some moments they both continued silent, but the eyes of the countess were fixed on him in fearful expectation.

At length constraining himself to speak, the earl said—"You expect, no doubt, that I bring you news of lady Rosaviva de Molines; alas! my dear madam, I have learned only a thousand contradictory reports, all which tend to confuse and render more intricate the affair, rather than throw light upon it."

"Wherever the dear unfortunate Rosaviva is concealed," said the countess, "may Heaven preserve her! for I am well convinced her absence is compulsory."

"By lady Louisa Feversham, and other of our friends," resumed the earl of Avondale, "I was told, that I myself, under pretence of your being suddenly taken ill,

had led lady Rosaviva from the Moorish party, with which we had just before been dancing; but at the very moment this circumstance was said to have taken place, I was, with the marquis of Feversham, endeavouring to procure for her a glass of lemonade, which the crowd prevented my obtaining as soon as I wished, and unhappily delayed me, while some villain, taking advantage of my absence, habited like myself, succeeded in imposing on her, and led her away. Sir Francis Barry told me, he saw Monteith quit the duchess of Winterton's as he entered, in earnest conversation with a mask in the habit of an astrologer; lady Sullivan assured me that a few moments before supper was announced, she saw three ladies in the pavilion, one in Moorish, the second in Spanish costume, and the third dressed as a duenna; these masks several persons of her party had pointed out as lady Rosaviva de Molines, lady Monteith, and the countess of Hartcourt."

The countess shook her head.



“ Alas, my dear madam !” resumed Avondale, “ I am convinced that part of these reports are false, and know not what credence to give the rest ; I saw in the picture gallery two persons, whom I mistook for lady Rosaviva and Monteith, but have now reason to believe it was not them ; it is too evident we have all been made the dupes of some detestable stratagem, of which the lovely, innocent Rosaviva will be the suffering victim.”

“ I trust not,” replied the countess ; “ into whatever hands she has fallen, remember she cannot be hidden from the eye of Providence ; you do not suspect Monteith ?”

“ No,” replied Avondale, “ I would pledge my soul upon his honour ; his absence only serves to convince me, that the same enmity pursues the angelic Rosaviva and himself.”

“ What step,” asked the countess, “ shall we pursue ? I am bewildered, and know not how to proceed.”

“ I have already set the police-officers to work,” said the earl, “ and have given

orders for advertisements, offering rewards, in all the newspapers."

The countess now related lady Monteith's adventure with the black domino—"But when we reached the pavilion," said she, "we saw only a mountebank, who offered pills to cure jealousy, and a fortune-teller, who rudely seized lady Monteith's hand, and poring over it, told her she was born to great trouble, and would shortly lose by death or separation a dear friend; perceiving lady Monteith listen to this nonsense with serious attention, I hurried her away, when the fortune-teller turning to me, said—'The wisdom that affects to despise my prescience may, before many hours have flown, acknowledge me a true oracle.'"

"Heaven defend the lovely, innocent Rosaviva!" exclaimed Avondale; "the enemy her virtues has created, it appears from corroborating circumstances, had assisting associates at the masquerade; for all who addressed either myself or lady Monteith, appeared to have the same de-

sign in view, to kindle jealousy and blacken the reputation of her whose soul is purity and honour; for nothing short of her own confession would induce me to encourage an idea derogatory to the fair fame of lady Rosaviva de Molines."

"May Heaven restore her to us!" said the countess, "and discover the contriver of this dreadful transaction."

"Grant me to know this enemy, this fiend," replied Avondale, the crimson of indignation flushing on his pale cheek, "and I will revenge with interest this outrage on the worshipped of my heart—I will have vengeance for her injuries and my own sufferings! but I must begone, nor waste the moments that should be employed in her recovery."

"What course," inquired the countess, "do you next intend to take?"

"It is my intention," replied the earl, "to proceed immediately for Dover; perhaps her persecutor may design for France. Angels guard you, dear madam!" said he, "pray for my success."

"Most fervently, be assured, beloved de Grey," replied the countess, as the closing door hid him from her sight.

A thousand terrible suspicions darted through the brain of the countess, as she continued leaning her head on her hand; she remembered that many of the costly diamonds that ornamented the Moorish habit worn by lady Rosaviva had been sent to madame Saillons, to be disposed according to her fancy; it was possible that this woman, seduced by the richness of the jewels, might have plotted to decoy her from the masquerade—to rob—perhaps to murder her; the blood of the countess ran cold at the horrible suggestion: lady Gertrude Montalban next became suspected of the anonymous letters received by lady Monteith and the earl of Avondale; she had been considered the author, and those letters appeared to the countess to be the beginning of the present mysterious and afflictive event.

A severe headache prevented the countess from going out that day; but after a tolerable good night's rest, the following

morning she ordered her carriage to the fancy-rooms of madame Saillons; here she found only her clerks and dress-makers, from whom she learned that madame Saillons had that morning set off for Paris, to purchase point lace for the wedding-suit of lady Louisa Feversham.

Disappointed in her design of examining madame Saillons, the countess directed her carriage to lady Gertrude Montalban's, who received her with an air of unusual stiffness and *hauteur*—"The motive of my present visit, lady Gertrude," said the countess, "is to inquire whether any intelligence has reached you respecting lady Rosaviva de Molines?"

"No, really, madam," replied lady Gertrude; "my friends are extremely delicate on the subject, knowing my close connexion with the Monteith family."

"You will pardon me," said the countess, "for not evincing an equal delicacy; but I really do not perceive what the Monteith family have to do with the disappearance of lady Rosaviva de Molines."

"You certainly cannot be ignorant, ma-

dam," replied lady Gertrude, " that lord Monteith has not been seen since the masquerade; and that lady Monteith, poor dear, injured woman, is breaking her heart."

" To lord Monteith's absence," resumed the countess, " I am no stranger, nor yet to the grief and suspicions of lady Monteith; and though I am not competent to account for the absence of lady Rosaviva or lord Monteith, I am so thoroughly persuaded of the honour and rectitude of both, that I would pledge my existence their disappearance has not been voluntary, and that, so far from being together, they are unacquainted with the fate of each other."

" The public hold a different opinion," said lady Gertrude; " they believe they are gone off together, as you will perceive from the perusal of this newspaper." She then pointed out a paragraph, which the countess, with extreme concern, read.

*" The jealousy of lady M——h, which lately reduced her to the brink of the grave, it appears, was not without foundation, her faithless lord having, it is reported,*

*eloped from the d—ss of W—n's masquerade, with lady R— de M—s; they are now believed to be on their way to S—h A—ca, where the frail fair one has considerable possessions."*

"The writer of this paragraph," said the countess of Hartcourt, "has the blackest of hearts; and I am not without suspicion," continued she, fixing her eyes on the face of lady Gertrude, "of the person."

"Indeed!" replied lady Gertrude, with an air of coldness; "but as suspicion is not proof, the writer may exult securely in the mischief the paragraph will occasion, whether false or true."

"You are certain," returned the countess, "that it is the invention of malice—a false and scandalous aspersion of the characters of two strictly-honourable persons."

"I am certain," repeated lady Gertrude, "you give me credit for superhuman knowledge; it would, believe me, madam, give me much pleasure to restore peace to the hearts the conduct of lady Rosaviva de Molines has so deeply wounded: no person, I am certain, would do more than

myself to remove the afflictions of lady Monteith, and bestow happiness on the earl of Avondale, whose predilection in favour of his cousin has occasioned pangs unutterable.”

Lady Gertrude paused, blushed, and affected to smother a sigh.

The countess of Hartcourt had not been unobservant of the pains taken by lady Gertrude to attract the notice and seduce the affections of the earl of Avondale; but knowing the true estimate he made of her character, she felt authorised to put an end to any hopes she might be inclined to encourage of hereafter succeeding in her designs on him.

“The affections of the earl of Avondale,” replied the countess, “are founded on reason, on a knowledge of the virtues and amiable disposition of his cousin—a conviction which no dark plottings of malice, no stratagems of envy, no schemes of ambition, will ever be able to remove, or even shake; and I am certain, if fate has ordained an eternal separation between lady Rosaviva de Molines and the earl of



Avondale, her image will never be effaced from his bosom by a second love, nor will he ever solicit or accept the hand of another."

The anger and mortification of lady Gertrude were visible to the countess, who rose and took her leave, observing, as she left the house, that wherever lady Rosaviva was detained, the watchful eye of Providence would protect her.

"Doubtless," replied lady Gertrude, sneeringly, and imitating the countess's tone, "innocence is Heaven's peculiar care."

"Neither," returned the countess, looking her in the face, "will it permit guilt to escape detection; the slanderers of lady Rosaviva will be held up to public scorn, and the hearts they have attempted to deceive will feel for them contempt and abhorrence."

"Then be it my delight," said lady Gertrude, as the carriage of the countess drove from her door, "to torture the hearts I have failed to subdue; and since the proud Avondale will not be mine, let my arts se-

parate him for ever from her he has dared to prefer; be it the solace of my mortifications to ruin her fame, and make an union between them impossible."

For some days lady Monteith resigned herself to jealousy and despair; deaf to all the arguments and persuasions of her friends, she persisted in the torturing belief that Monteith and lady Rosaviva had long concerted their elopement—"Oh, yes," said she, "he had no doubt, long before that fatal masquerade, planned the abandonment of his wretched wife and unoffending children; and while the treacherous, artful Rosaviva deceived me with professions of friendship, she had arranged with my husband the dreadful scheme that was to devote me to wretchedness."

"And yet," said the countess of Hartcourt, "strong as are your suspicions, and much as appearances are against lady Rosaviva, there is a circumstance which, to impartial minds, pleads greatly in favour of her innocence."

Lady Monteith, with a look of anguish, replied—"Oh, if there is a hope to which

my soul may cling—if there is the shadow of a supposition that Monteith is faithful, and Rosaviva virtuous, name it, and snatch me from despair.”

“Is it not probable,” said the countess, “that if an elopement had been planned, some kind of preparation would have been made? lady Rosaviva has not taken with her so much as a change of linen; even her purse remains in the drawer, with a pocket-book, which contains documents of the highest consequence to her fortune.”

Lady Monteith hastily rang the bell, and desired to see Fairford, the valet of lord Monteith—“When I spoke with you before,” said lady Monteith, “I forgot to ask you what clothes, what linen, lord Monteith had taken with him?”

“My lord has not with him so much as a cravat,” replied Fairford, “and must, I should suppose, be in great want of a change of linen; I before offered your ladyship the keys my lord gave into my charge the night of the masquerade.”

The valet being dismissed, lady Monteith acknowledged that she drew some

comfort from the certainty that no preparation had been made on the part of lord Monteith or lady Rosaviva for an elopement.

“Consider this conviction,” said the countess, “as the particular favour of Providence, designed to remove from your mind unjust and injurious suspicion ; consider it as the precursor of returning happiness, and let it enable you to support your present affliction with fortitude ; let it remind you that you are a mother, and that in the absence of their father, your children have double claims upon your care and attention ; rouse yourself from this sorrow—this despondency, which, while it preys upon your health, gives a triumph to the enemy of your peace, who rejoices at the success of machinations that plunge you in despair.”

A ray of hope now visited the sorrowing bosom of lady Monteith ; the representations of the countess of Hartcourt introduced the possibility of Monteith’s fidelity, in spite of condemning circumstances ; his children were tenderly beloved, and for

their sakes she determined to struggle with her afflictions; again she received the visits of her friends, and though her heart still doubted, she prayed to be satisfied that Rosaviva was yet worthy of her friendship; and to this end she left no method untried that she conceived likely to discover the concealment of Monteith, the mystery of whose disappearance still remained a secret to the public.

While the countess of Hartcourt and lady Monteith remained in a state of the most painful suspense and uncertainty, unable to obtain intelligence of any sort that could tend to alleviate their sorrows, or diminish their apprehensions, the daily papers were filled with paragraphs injurious to the reputation of lady Rosaviva de Molines, who was confidently stated to be living in retirement with lord Monteith, as his *chère-amie*; and much as lady Monteith struggled to conquer the feelings of jealousy that tortured her bosom, she could not help yielding belief to the general opinion. Far different were the ideas of the countess of Hartcourt, who, though she

could in no way account for the absence of lord Monteith, still entertained suspicions of madame Saillons; that Rosaviva had been murdered for the sake of her diamonds, was an idea that took firm possession of her mind, and being obliged to confine these thoughts to her own bosom, added to her anguish.

In the mean time, the earl of Avondale, without stopping to take refreshment or rest, arrived at Dover, where he learned that a gentleman and lady in outlandish dresses had arrived there in a hired post-chaise, and that they had gone almost immediately on board a packet-boat, which was ready to sail when they arrived; from the account of the waiters at the inn, it appeared that the lady was in high spirits, perfectly content, and willing to proceed to France, for they had seen the gentleman kiss her hand, which she did not at all resent; and that the lady had offered a young woman, the niece of the mistress of the house, very high wages to go with her in the capacity of waiting-maid.

This account, delivered with all the simplicity of truth, considerably increased the agony of Avondale's mind; from the description given by the waiters of the person and dress of these strangers, not a doubt remained but they were lord Monteith and lady Rosaviva de Molines; and as from the report of the people of the inn, it appeared that her manner evinced neither displeasure nor repugnance, the earl of Avondale began to think it folly and madness in him to pursue them further—"She has made her election," said he; "she is her own mistress, and perfectly at liberty to act as she thinks proper; I am not authorised—I have no right to force her from the arms of the villain who has seduced her—I thought her purity itself. Oh, what a dreadful fall is here! wretched Rosaviva, what will be your agonies hereafter, when you reflect on the ruin of your fame, which once stood so proudly eminent—when you remember the disgrace you have brought on friends who idolized you—when your mind recalls the injured

lady Monteith, whom you have robbed of a husband, and her innocent little ones of their father !”

While these thoughts passed in the brain of Avondale, he determined to return to London, and leave to their fate a pair unworthy of his pursuit or solicitude ; but while his hand was on the bell, to order a chaise for his return to town, he learned that a packet was that moment to sail for Calais ; love, resentment, and jealousy, were boiling in his mind ; the two latter urged him to go back to London, but love, full of tender compassion, presented Rosaviva already repentant of her error, and in want of a friend to rescue her from vice and misery—“ I will proceed to France,” said the earl ; “ if I can but meet them, she will be persuaded—she will return to virtue—Monteith will remember the claims of his wife and children—he will relinquish her whom he has undone—he shall—he must—or my arm—be still, revengeful passions ! be calm, my bosom ! let me act with fortitude, with decision ; but let not my hand shed the blood of the



man I once honoured and respected; let me not make the virtuous lady Monteith a widow, and her children fatherless."

Sick in mind and fatigued in body, the earl of Avondale reached the English hotel at Calais, where, unable to proceed, he was obliged to go to bed. The next day, on renewing his inquiries, he found that the persons he was in search of had been there, and that the lady had taken with her the sister of a *marchand de mode*, who lived a few doors down the street. The doubts of Avondale were at an end when he entered the shop of madame Denoyer, for he beheld the Moorish dress worn by Rosaviva at the masquerade, in the hands of a young girl, who was busily employed in stripping off the superb silver fringe with which it was ornamented. Madame Denoyer had written down the name of milord Anglais and the beautiful lady on a card, but she could not find it; she knew, however, that they were gone to Paris, and that she had given them a direction to her cousin, monsieur Parisot, who had superb lodgings to let in the Rue St. Hillary.

Thither also the earl of Avondale went, but found to his great disappointment that he could not be accommodated in the house of monsieur Parisot, who, with much importance, boasted that his house was entirely engaged by a new-married pair.

Avondale started and turned pale; but unheeding his agitation, monsieur Parisot continued—"If one marriage is not sufficient for milord Anglais at London, they have gone through the ceremony twice; in the morning at Notre Dame, in the evening at the ambassador's chapel."

"What depravity!" said Avondale, "what a mockery of sacred rites!"

Finding that the new-married pair were out, Avondale was about to depart, when a carriage stopping at the door, agitated him so much that he was obliged to sit down. The staircase was opposite where the earl sat, and the persons entering from the street were compelled to pass through the hall to reach the staircase.

Never before did Avondale feel repugnant to meet Rosaviva, but now he wished that his first encounter with Monteith had

been without witness ; but there was no alternative, and he stood up to face the man whom he once loved as a friend, but now esteemed his worst and direst foe, who had wrested from him all earthly happiness ; a voice now sounded on his ear, but it was not Monteith's ; he stepped forward, and beheld colonel Sligo and his new-made bride.

The joy of this discovery prevented for a moment his offering congratulations on their marriage ; while they, all astonishment, inquired to what lucky chance they owed the pleasure of seeing the earl of Avondale at Paris ?

The earl briefly related the mysterious event that had taken place the night of the masquerade, and that, deceived by the description of the dresses, he had followed them from Dover all the way to Paris.

The colonel and his lady laughed heartily at the mistake ; giddy, thoughtless, and unfeeling, the journey of Avondale to them appeared an excellent joke ; but perceiving that he did not laugh with them, they began to condemn the conduct of lady

Rosaviva; but here he was equally sensitive, and being too polite to continue a topic they saw occasioned so much pain, they changed the subject to their own elopement, and ended with inviting the earl to dine and go to the opera with them; the heart of Avondale was not tuned to pleasure; his thoughts were all dissonance; his feelings, tortured by doubt and suspense, forbade his enjoyment of ease or pleasure; he politely declined their invitation, and returned to his hotel, to give orders for retracing the way he had so rapidly travelled.

The meeting with the colonel and his lady, who considered themselves safer from pursuit in going to France than Scotland, had given some ease to his heart; it revived the hope that Rosaviva might be innocent, the possibility that Monteith and she were not together. At Calais the earl of Avondale met madame Saillons, who having completed her purchase of the point lace, was returning to London; the same packet brought the earl and her to Dover, where, in getting out of the boat, she let a

small box fall into the sea—"Diable!" said madame Saillons, "I am ver much unlucky! that be von *petit* box of rouge-vegetable, that I make purchase for lady Gertrude Montalban; *fi donc*, I shall lose de favour and de five guinea for keep de littel secret."

The earl of Avondale was not known to madame Saillons, but he lost not a word she said respecting lady Gertrude, in whose confidence it appeared she was to a great extent; but this was no time for examination—the earl saw the Frenchwoman get into a stagecoach for London, which he shortly after followed in a postchaise.

His pale and altered countenance, expressive of anguished feelings, alarmed the countess of Hartcourt; and having heard his history of hopes, fears, and disappointments, she insisted that he should retire to bed, and endeavour by sleep to refresh his jaded spirits, and renew his exhausted powers.

## CHAPTER III.



“ Though sunk in grief and exercis’d in care,  
The noble heart can never know despair;  
But while around him storms and whirlwinds rave,  
Shall feel and own that Heav’n has pow’r to save:  
E’en while he writhes with pangs of fiercest pain,  
Can give him ease and happiness again;  
Then let the child of woe suppress his sighs,  
Confide in Heav’n, and hope for brighter skies.”

THE carriage into which lord Monteith entered with the astrologer drove so furiously over the stones, that the questions he asked were lost in the noise and velocity of the motion; to converse was absolutely impossible; all he could do, therefore, was to make a virtue of necessity, and wait with all the patience he could muster till the carriage should stop at its destination, which, after a considerable length of time, took place in a part of the city utterly unknown to lord Monteith.

On the coach-door being opened, he discovered they had drawn up exactly opposite a mean-looking narrow court, into which the astrologer pointing, said—"Our ride ends here."

Lord Monteith felt extremely unwilling to enter the court, for by the clear starlight he perceived the place was lonely, and the houses so very shabby, that the idea of robbery, and by a natural combination of ideas, murder, pressed on his imagination; but while he stood irresolute, and hesitating to follow the steps of the person whom he had so imprudently trusted, the carriage drove off; and though he called after the driver to stop, was out of sight in a moment—"I am lost," thought Monteith, as he observed the astrologer fumbling in his bosom for, as he supposed, a pistol, or some other implement of death; without drawing forth his hand, the astrologer said—"Come, my lord, we lose the precious time, and I am impatient to get housed, for the air 'bites shrewdly—'tis a nipping frost."

"To speak in plain terms," replied lord

Monteith, "I have no desire to proceed further, for I fear your intention."

"What do you apprehend?" asked the astrologer, hastily.

"That you are decoying me to some more secret spot," replied Monteith, "for the purpose of robbing me."

The astrologer would have spoke, but lord Monteith continued—"Hear me out; if plunder is your object, which I strongly suspect, I assure you on my word of honour, I have no money about me, nor any thing else of value; the ring on my finger, and this," taking off his hat, which was fastened up in the front with a rich brilliant star, "with my ring," continued lord Monteith, "I will part only with life; but for this bauble, pointing to the star, if your necessities force you to depredation, take it and let me depart; and assure yourself I will never inquire after the diamonds, or mention this night's adventure."

The astrologer put back the hand that held towards him the jewel, saying—"I am no robber, my lord; I solemnly swear



I have not conducted you hither for any purpose of plunder, or intention of injury to your person; if you doubt these solemn assertions, farewell—at the top of the street is a tavern, where you can——”

The sincerity of the astrologer's manner restored the confidence of lord Monteith; his refusal of the star convinced him that robbery was not intended; his curiosity became stronger than ever, and he resolved to see the end of the adventure. Interrupting the astrologer's speech, he bade him lead on——“Be thy intents wicked or charitable,” said lord Monteith, “I will follow thee.”

They passed through the narrow court, and into a dirty lane, at the bottom of which the astrologer stopped before a large, old-fashioned building, and drawing from his bosom a key, opened the street-door; a lamp was burning in the passage, which the astrologer took up, and requesting lord Monteith to follow him, he led him across an antique hall, up a narrow, ill-contrived staircase, into a long gallery, at the end of which an open door discover-

ed the blaze of a comfortable fire. Having shewn Monteith into this room, which was hung with tapestry, and furnished with heavy chairs and massy tables, the astrologer set down the lamp, which threw on the hideous figures in the tapestry a glare that rendered them still more frightful. Monteith cast a glance round the extensive apartment, and its gloomy appearance did not tend to reconcile him to his situation; but perceiving the astrologer throw off his hat, to which was attached his long silver hair, mask, and flowing beard, he drew nearer to the lamp, but the countenance he surveyed was utterly unknown to him, and in a tone, indicative of uneasy impatience, he said—"Where is the person you taught me to expect, from whom I am to obtain the discoveries you have said are necessary to my peace?"

The reply of the astrologer was a loud laugh.

Lord Monteith, with no little indignation, said—"As I do not understand the joke, I cannot partake your mirth; you

will, however, be good enough to recollect I wait your elucidation."

The astrologer having retreated to the door, replied—"And you must still wait till I am at liberty to gratify your curiosity."

As he spoke he quitted the room, and slamming the door after him, turned the key on the astonished Monteith, whom rage and disappointment for some moments deprived of utterance; but presently recovering reflection, he loudly demanded his liberty, and with all his force attempted to burst open the door; but the oak, of which it was made, resisted his efforts, and finding his utmost strength inadequate to the undertaking, he flew to the windows; but these, to his extreme disappointment, he discovered, as he drew back the curtains, were narrow-pointed casements, too small to admit the passage of a child, and opening, as he supposed, by the dim light of the stars peeping from between heavy clouds, on a paved court belonging to the house.

A thousand times Monteith blamed his own imprudent curiosity and credulity, that had led him into a snare, the meaning of which bewildered and perplexed his mind, without producing a solution or cause of such a strange procedure against him. Robbery did not appear to be intended, or why had the diamond star been refused? Was murder designed? Monteith felt a cold shuddering through his frame, as this terrible idea crossed his imagination, yet he could recollect no enemy whose hate could possibly be so implacable as to thirst for his life, though his situation warranted the fear that he was decoyed thither for purposes that rendered his eternal separation from his family but too probable: as he paced the room in distraction of mind, he perceived a door which had hitherto escaped his notice; perhaps in that room his murderers were concealed: but though unarmed, he determined to face death with manly fortitude; he pushed open the door, which admitted him into a small bedchamber, where, on the dressing-table, he saw a folded paper addressed

to himself; it assured him the bed was well aired, and prepared for his reception; that he might repose in perfect security, for no evil was designed against his person, further than detaining him a prisoner for a few weeks.

“A few weeks!” exclaimed Monteith; “in that time Julia will run mad. What mystery is this by which I am surrounded? who is it that presumes to put my person in confinement? but I will not tamely submit to this detention—I will, if possible, discover why I have been decoyed hither, and at whose instigation.” But in vain did he call to the utmost extent of his voice, in vain he beat against the door, with all the violence of a determined spirit struggling for liberty; the door resisted all his attempts to force it open, and no reply was made to his loud calling, except by the hoarse and deep barking of a dog whom he had disturbed, and who expressed his displeasure beneath the windows of the tapestry chamber.

At length all was profoundly still, and having watched the last spark of the fire

till it went out, and the lamp being nearly in the same state, he threw himself on the bed, not entirely free from apprehension, notwithstanding the assurance conveyed in the note; but even in this unpleasant state sleep surprised him, and when he awoke the next morning, he found that some person had entered the room while he slept, for a change of linen was placed by his bedside, and the diamond star which he had torn from his hat, and left in the outer room, was laid on the dressing-table, with a paper under it, on which was wrote in a large hand—"The person who detains you is not a robber."

On passing into the outer room, lord Monteith found breakfast prepared, and a good fire, which was necessary to give cheerfulness to a large gloomy chamber, rendered more dismal by the state of the weather, a thick snow falling—"I will neither waste my strength by despair or famine," said lord Monteith, pouring out a cup of coffee, which he found excellent; "after having eat and drank, I will again reconnoitre my prison."

While he took his breakfast, his eye wandered over the time-demolished tapestry, the colours of which in some parts were so faded as to preclude all knowledge of the subject; while in others, David dancing before the ark, Sampson tearing the lion, and Goliath defying the Israelites, stood frightfully conspicuous.

Lord Monteith had scarce concluded his meal, when he heard the key turn in the lock, and a tall man of very peculiar countenance entered the room, followed by an extraordinary large Russian stag-hound; turning to the dog, in a foreign accent, the man said—"Nestor, guard the door." Obedient to the word of command, the dog threw his huge length across the entrance, where he remained so formidable a guard, that Monteith feared to rouse him, by attempting to liberate himself by the door.

"Your lordship has rested well, I trust," said the man, looking at him from under a pair of bushy black eyebrows.

"Perfectly," replied lord Monteith; "you are now, I suppose, come to fulfil your promise."

“I know of none given to you,” returned the man, taking hold of the tea-tray.

“Did you not lead me hither,” said lord Monteith, “under pretence of introducing me to the knowledge of——”

“I never had the honour of conversing with you in my life before,” answered the man.

“How!” returned Monteith, “will you deny that, disguised as an astrologer, you decoyed me last night from the duchess of Winterton’s masquerade?”

“The science of astrology I never yet pretended to,” said the man.

Monteith was astonished at the cool effrontery of the man, on whom fixing his eyes, he asked—“Are you not the astrologer?”

“No,” answered the man, “I am not; I repeat to you, I never met you at a masquerade in my life—I detest such mummery.”

“The features of the person who brought me hither much resembled yours,” said lord Monteith.



“About as much as yours do,” returned the man.

“That is a confession that you know him,” resumed Monteith; “of you then, who doubtless are acquainted with his motives, I demand why I have been brought hither? why am I detained?”

“I am not authorised to answer questions,” replied the man; “if I know the astrologer, it is more than you ever will; and as to the why you have been brought here—have you no guess?”

“No,” replied lord Monteith, “I have not the most distant idea.”

“Nor I neither,” said the man, snatching up the tea-tray, and moving towards the door, bawling as he pushed it open with his foot—“Lisette, Lisette, where are you, girl?”

“Here, father,” replied a soft female voice.

Monteith looked towards the door, and beheld a young girl of pale and pensive countenance, who took the tea-tray from the man, and instantly departed without

looking into the room. The man then returned, and having stirred the fire, asked lord Monteith at what hour he would like to dine?

Having replied to this question, lord Monteith asked—"How long is my confinement to continue?"

"I have never been told," said the man.

"Can I be indulged with pen, ink, and paper?" asked lord Monteith.

"Yes," returned the man, "but if you want to write letters——" He paused and smiled.


"I do want to write letters," said lord Monteith.

"Well, you may write them," resumed the man, "but you must wait for their delivery."

"How long?" asked Monteith.

"Till you are at liberty to put them in the post-office yourself," said the man.

Lord Monteith surveyed the man, and thought it possible to conquer him, but the dog was doubtless attached to his master, and would prove an opponent not to be overcome: seeing the impossibility of



escape, he asked for a book—"The hours will be long and tedious," said he, "and will need some amusement."

"I will ask the girl," said the man; "she perhaps may have some books, but for my part I never read—I have other matters to employ my attention, and occupy my time." As he spoke he bade Nestor follow him; the dog immediately obeyed, and was quitting the room, when the man pushing him back—"Stay here," said he, "Nestor, and keep lord Monteith company till I return."

The dog laid himself across the hearth; the door was left open, and lord Monteith, as he sat, beheld at the extremity of the gallery the stairs he had ascended—"And what," said he, "prevents my attempting my escape?"

He started from his chair with this intent, but the dog instantly seized him, and with horrid growlings held him fast, till the return of the man released him from the dread of having the flesh torn from his arms.

"You have done well not to struggle,"

said the man, calling off the dog; "Nestor is a faithful guard, and would have torn you to pieces. Here is the only book I can find," said he, throwing a tattered volume on the table. "To the street-door, Nestor; go, boy, guard—guard." As he spoke he left the room, followed by the dog, and Monteith heard the key again turned in the lock.

"Julia, my beloved Julia, my darling children," said he, "you, I trust, are safe; happy I am certain Julia cannot be, while my fate is thus involved—thus strangely wrapped in mystery, and for escape at present it appears impossible." He then recollected his bedchamber window, and hastened to examine it; like those of the other room, it had only a small casement that opened; but the wood-work appeared so much decayed, that he thought he could, without great difficulty, make an opening sufficiently large to pass through; but the prospect beyond held out little encouragement; the window was placed on what appeared to be the roof of a stable, and far as the eye could reach, only the tops of houses

were to be seen—"Patience, of all our virtues," said lord Monteith, "is the most precious; and mine will, or I am greatly deceived, have sufficient demands upon it before the conclusion of this strange adventure." He then returned to the sitting-room, and took another survey of the windows there; they looked on a small paved court, above which they were at least twenty feet; the court was surrounded on all sides by high walls, under one of which sat a hen with a brood of chickens; while Monteith watched the hen gathering her little ones under her wings, a tear started to his eye; he thought of his wife and children, and the distress his absence must occasion; while he stood hopelessly leaning against the window-frame, he saw Lissette, with a plate in her hand, come into the court to feed the chickens; one of them was lame; this he saw her take up, examine, and caress with an air of such concern and tenderness, as convinced him she had a kind and feeling heart.

"It is when unobserved by the world," said Monteith, "that the natural disposi-

tion appears; and humanity and feeling are as evident in our conduct towards a chicken, as when exercised for the benefit or relief of our fellow-creatures."

While Monteith continued to watch Lissette and the chickens, he saw the man approach her; he could not hear their conversation, but supposed it related to himself, as the man often pointed towards the windows, and seemed to use menacing action; he perceived also that Lissette wept, for she frequently lifted the corner of her apron to her eyes.

At length they left the court, and Monteith returned to the fireside to muse on his disagreeable situation—to plan and reject methods of liberation; to escape from his own troubled thoughts, he took up the book, and on the cover found the name of Sybilla Beverly—"Sybilla Beverly!" said lord Monteith, "why that was the name of the former possessor of Norley Abbey; this is very strange!"

A vague suspicion of his enemy now entered his mind, but recollecting how books

are tossed about, lost, and given away, he could not consider the volume before him as proof against lady Gertrude Montalban, because, though Norley Abbey now belonged to her, the book might be the property of a person to whom she was a stranger. The contents of the volume were miscellaneous, and having turned over many of the pages, at last he began to read

***THE KNIGHT OF THE BURNING CAVERN.***

"'Twas high on a mountain, the morning shone gay,  
Floranthe, the brown maid, alone took her way;  
She light trod the turf, while she cast her dark eye  
On the blue stretching arch of a clear summer sky.

Tears dew'd her bright cheek, for just then from her side,  
That morning had made her young sister a bride;  
The bells rang out merrily, heavily she  
Cried—"Adieu, Rosabel, I am parted from thee!

Thy stature was short, and thy eyes they were blue,  
And loose o'er thy bosom thy yellow hair flew;  
I never thought much, I confess, of thy charms,  
Though many gay suitors woo'd thee to their arms.

I ne'er won a smile, nor attracted an eye;  
Unregarded I sat, were Rosabel nigh;  
A fortune more kind may in future betide,  
For Rosabel now is lord Reginald's bride.

My form is majestic, my bosom is fair ;  
Like wing of the raven, as glossy my hair ;  
Like jet are my eyes, yet no love they command ;  
No suitor to me has e'er offer'd his hand.

• In vain I my hair with fresh garlands entwine,  
In vain on my breast does the summer rose shine ;  
They wither and fade, and their perfumes invite  
No lover to me, neither peasant nor knight.

Along the wild mountain unheeded I rove ;  
My ear never meets the soft whisper of love ;  
Like a rose of the desert, I waste my perfume,  
No lip drinks my sweetness, no eye greets my bloom."

Before her the sea roll'd its billow of foam,  
Far distant the groves that encircled her home ;  
Around her the mountains their dark shadows threw,  
Gigantic in form, and terrific in hue.

Just then 'o'er the hill-path came prancing in sight,  
Attracting her eye, and arresting her flight,  
A knight on a courser he tightly did rein,  
Which stamping and foaming seem'd earth to disdain.

The knight's casque was burni-h'd, his plume snowy white ;  
His armour was gold, his shield dazzl'd the sight ;  
It sparkled and glitter'd like fire to her view,  
As graceful his form from the steed's back he threw.

" Oh fair one," he cried, " I have heard of thy name,  
And far-distant am come, induc'd by thy fame ;  
I languish'd and sigh'd ere thy form I could see,  
And now my breast blazes with passion for thee.



Haste, quit these lone mountains, with me for thy guide;  
I'll lead thee where grandeur and pleasure preside;  
You cannot delight in this wild savage scene;  
Away to my palace, where you shall be queen!"

"You're a stranger," she cried, and her hand from his  
clasp

She struggled to free, but 'twas firm in his grasp;  
"I must not, I dare not, I will not abide;  
Release me, sir knight, or some ill will betide."

"What ill can betide, and what have you to fear?  
These mountains are lonely, no mortal is near;  
On my truth, on my honour, fair trembler, rely;  
Come, mount on my courser—together we'll fly."

"I dare not, sir knight, in a stranger confide;  
On the back of that courser I never could ride;  
His nostrils breathe flame, and his feet are so light,  
The earth seems untouch'd as he stretches in flight."

He prest her, he knelt at her feet, and he swore  
That he lov'd her, as never had youth lov'd before;  
He sigh'd, he persuaded, at length did succeed;  
Floranthe was plac'd on the knight's coal-black steed.

O'er mountains they flew—their converse was gay;  
Of love the knight talk'd, and not long seem'd the way,  
For so well could he flatter, and wheedle, and smile,  
The wild tracts they pass'd seem'd scarcely a mile.

At length, when the twilight's grey banner was rear'd,  
And only a ridge of rude mountains appear'd—  
"Oh, tell me," she cried, "whither fly we so fast?  
The road it seems wild, and the day closes fast."

I am weary and faint—Oh ! when shall we come  
To this palace of yours, sir knight, to your home ?”  
“ Not far is our journey—it ends here indeed,”  
He spoke, and spurr'd into a cavern his steed.

'Twas dark, and Floranthe shriek'd wild with affright.  
“ What dire place is this ?” and she clung to the knight.  
“ 'Tis the entrance,” he said, “ to a palace of mine ;  
Take courage, my fair ; you will soon see it shine.”

'Twas stifling and hot, as the steed onward fled ;  
Again to the knight she in agony said—  
“ Oh, take me, sir knight, from this horrible den !  
Return me, I pray, to the mountains again !

My temples are throbbing, my brain seems on fire ;  
Oh, turn thy steed round ! I request, I desire ;  
If you love me, sir knight, to the hills turn again ;  
This heat and this darkness will madden my brain.”

The knight still rode on—“ If your bosom,” said he,  
“ Felt a passion like that which I feel for thee,  
In darkness or light you'd experience no fear,  
As long as the object ador'd was but near.”

And now, on a sudden, a fierce blaze of light  
Burst at once, and disclos'd to her terrified sight  
Huge pillars, and arches of flame sparkling round ;  
But the knight and the steed no longer were found.

Before her a throne was exalted on high,  
Enwreath'd with bright sparkles of iv'ry dye ;  
The steps were of flame—she shriek'd loud—“ I expire !  
Alas ! I'm enclos'd in a palace of fire !”

Shooting upwards, the fires arch'd over her head,  
As through the wide cavern distracted she fled ;  
But vainly she flew, for on flame-darting wing,  
Opposing her passage, she met the Fire King.

And horror-struck now, in his eyes blazing bright  
She discover'd the glance of the armour-clad knight ;  
Still, his lip the same smile of deceit could command,  
And her shudd'ring touch felt the same burning hand.

"In vain would you fly," said the fierce Fire King;  
"You cannot escape from the speed of my wing;  
You ask'd for a lover—you vow'd to be mine—  
My hold on your bosom I'll never resign.

Cast your eyes round my palace ; the flames that aspire  
Form the wishes of love and its ardent desire ;  
'Twas love that you wish'd for, and love's burning chain  
Wound tight round your bosom shall ever remain.

And still shall my form, by day and by night,  
Glow fierce on your fancy, and flash on your sight ;  
By magical spell you shall hate me and fear,  
Admire me, despise me, and yet hold me dear."

On his throne she was whirl'd, and close to her breast  
His own burning bosom he eagerly prest ;  
Around her he folded his blue-flashing wing,  
And Floranthe was bride to the fierce Fire King.

#### MORAL.

Beware then, ye maidens ! of vanity's sway,  
Nor let curiosity lead you astray ;  
Be deaf to the strange knight, though sweetly he smile,  
For his words, though like honey, are meant to beguile.

If you follow his lead, you are caught in his chain ;  
In your bosom he fixes shame, sorrow, and pain ;  
In vain may you struggle—you'll never get free ;  
The delight of the false knight is your misery."

"This tale," said lord Monteith, closing the book, "is applicable to me; an imprudent curiosity has led me into the power of an unknown enemy, from whose grasp I know not how to escape."

With his dinner came the tall man and his dog Nestor; and while he dined, Lissette was employed in arranging the bed-chamber.

Again lord Monteith endeavoured to draw the man into conversation, but his replies to his questions were short and unsatisfactory; and with an inflexibility of spirit that would have done honour to a better cause, he refused the large reward lord Monteith offered him to permit his escape.

"No," said the man, "I will not accept a bribe; it is a principle of mine to be faithful to my employer—but who that employer is, you will never learn from me. Come, Lissette, have you done there?"

The strange confinement of lord Monteith had lasted near five weeks, during which tedious time he had been regularly supplied with clean linen; but the Spanish habit, made of satin, being still his dress, began to wear out, and appeared soiled; of this his attendant took notice, and said, a suit of clothes would be provided for him in the course of a day or two.

After this conversation, going into the bedchamber which Lissette had just left, Monteith found, under the neatly-folded towel, a note in a female hand; but it was too dark to read it, and he was obliged to restrain his impatience till the man brought up the lamp, which was this night much later than usual; being left alone, he eagerly drew forth and perused the contents of the note, which bade him, when he supposed the family retired to rest, examine the tapestry on the side of the room where it was most decayed, and he would find a door, the key of which was in the drawer of the table at which he constantly sat—“Open the door,” said the writer, “and expect a visit from a person, who would, if in her

power, give you liberty; who feels for your situation, and who, though unable to do you any essential service, may yet put you on your guard against further outrage."

Monteith read the note a second time, and as he pushed it into the fire, according to the desire of the writer, began to reflect on the possibility of this billet being another snare for his credulity, which might be punished even with the loss of life—"Yet," said Monteith, "if murder is designed, the lonely situation of these rooms is well adapted for such a deed of horror: be the intention of the note what it may," continued he, "I will admit the writer—Heaven be my guard!"

In the drawer he found a small rusty key, and holding the lamp against the tapestry, after a minute search he discovered an aperture, which he supposed was the keyhole; as yet it was too early to open the door, and Monteith having stirred up the fire, again sat down to meditate—"Death," said he, "would be preferable to this seclusion; better to sink at once to

the repose of the grave, than drag out existence far from the beloved objects of my hopes and wishes."

Before midnight, a storm of wind rose, that rattled the casements, and piercing through the cracks of the door, which it shook on its heavy hinges, almost extinguished the lamp that burned on the table before lord Monteith, who having placed it securely on the chimneypiece, listened, in the pauses of the wind, to ascertain, if possible, whether the house was at rest, and he might yet venture to uncloze the door; while he stood irresolute, he fancied he heard a gentle tapping behind the tapestry, but a loud and long gust of wind at that moment shaking the door and windows, he stood uncertain from what cause the noise had proceeded; stealing softly along the floor, he placed his ear against the door, and again distinctly heard the tapping repeated. Monteith, rendered desperate by circumstance, hesitated no longer; he instantly applied the key, but the rust it had contracted rendered it necessary to apply a considerable degree of force,

when, nearly hopeless, the key turned in the lock, the door was pushed open, and Monteith beheld, instead of a ferocious-looking ruffian armed for murder, the gentle Lissette, pale, trembling, and abashed; she was timidly shrinking back, when taking her cold hand, he led her towards the fire, where having seated her, he expressed the hope that her kind compassion for him would be attended with no danger or inconvenience to herself.

Recovering her self-possession, Lissette replied—"No; I believe—nay, I am certain, I have nothing to apprehend—I am perfectly safe, for my father, whose chamber joins mine, was in a profound sleep before I ventured hither."

"Do you know," asked Monteith, "the person who has excited your compassion? are you acquainted with my name?"

"No," returned Lissette, "but it is easy to perceive the uneasiness your confinement gives you—and, alas! being a prisoner myself, I can feel for your situation."

"You a prisoner?" said Monteith, in a



tone of astonishment; "does not this house belong to your father?"

"I know not," replied Lissette, "to whom it belongs, nor where it is situated; I was brought here at night in a coach, and I have never been suffered to go out of it but once, and that was to a masquerade some weeks ago, when I was ordered by my father to put on a Moorish habit that he brought me, while he disguised himself in a dress exactly similar to that you now wear."

Monteith listened in amazement—"What is your father's name?" said he, "and what is his occupation?"

"My father's name," replied Lissette, "is Piere Renaude; he is a native of France, and conducted a newspaper at Paris; but for condemning too freely the conduct of government, he was obliged to save his life by flying his country, where rewards were offered for his head. Soon after our arrival in this country, my father married a widow, with whom we lodged, and her sister, the housekeeper at Norley Abbey, taking a liking to me, I went to

spend the summer with her; here I became acquainted with the son of the steward, whose society was so agreeable, that at the repeated request of Mrs. Hill, I consented to remain at the Abbey."

"Norley Abbey!" repeated lord Monteith, "do you mean the seat of lady Gertrude Montalban?"

"The same," replied Lissette; "it is a Gothic building, situated on the edge of the Severn, nearly opposite to Berkley Castle."


"I am wrong to interrupt you," said Monteith; "pray proceed."

"After I had consented to remain at the Abbey," continued Lissette, "I perceived a strange alteration in Mrs. Hill's temper—her requests were changed into commands; and though I received no wages, I had the office of her waiting-woman imposed upon me; though naturally inclined to oblige, I was not pleased to be imposed on, and had not the persuasions of Forester detained me, I should have quitted the Abbey on the first discovery of Mrs. Hill's disposition. Among the servants of the Abbey, it

was confidently asserted that the north wing was haunted, and after nightfall not a soul would venture thither; at first I was disposed to believe their superstitious tales, for about midnight I frequently heard noises, which confirmed my opinion of the Abbey being troubled; but the arguments of William Forester, founded on reason and religion, soon cured me of the fear of ghosts: at this time too the gay count de Syllaric, and his still-gayer valet, Des-saines, came to reside at Norley Abbey, and we had frequently concerts and dances, that contributed to enliven the long hours, and render the gloomy Abbey more cheerful. The count de Syllaric had known my father in France, and through his interest with lady Gertrude Montalban, my brother established a newspaper in London, which, being a good scholar, and a clever young man, he writes for, as well as conducts; on one of his visits to the Abbey, I informed my father of my unpleasant situation, and begged that he would take me home; but far from censuring the conduct of Mrs. Hill, he strongly recom-

mended my courting her favour, by paying exact obedience to her commands, and said, he feared it would not be agreeable to madame Renaude to have me at home, but promised he would talk with her on the subject, and let me know the result of his application. From this time, Mrs. Hill became more imperious than ever; but the gallantry of Dessaines soon drew off her attention from me, and gave me more frequent opportunities of conversing with William Forester, who begged me to wait with patience till the death of his uncle, a very old man, put him in possession of a comfortable farm, when he would marry me, and remove me to peace and happiness. Comforted by these assurances, I endeavoured to perform the work imposed on me by Mrs. Hill with cheerfulness; and not at all approving her manner, which I thought much too free with Dessaines, I used to leave them and retire to my own room with a book; being very fond of reading, I frequently sat for an hour or more after I supposed all the family at rest; at these times the idea of

ghosts often took possession of my fancy, for I frequently heard odd sounds which startled me, and for which I could never account, and which required the recollection of all William Forester's arguments and reasonings to subdue the terrors they occasioned. One night, having finished an interesting volume, and not feeling inclined to sleep, I stole softly along the gallery, and counting the hall clock strike twelve, I thought I might venture through the armoury, as the servants had told me the ghosts never walked there before one; and a flight of stairs led from thence to the library, from whence I wanted to fetch the second volume of the work I was reading; carrying a lamp in my hand, I had reached the middle of the armoury, when a deep hollow groan made me start, in expectation of encountering some fearful spectacle; as I cast my eyes round in dismay to discover from whence the sound came, I saw a light streaming from under a door, which I had never before observed; in spite of the tremor of my limbs, I crept softly to the door, which was at the upper



end of the armoury ; as I reached it, I plainly heard the voice of Mrs. Hill ; though satisfied that it was no supernatural sound which met my ear, I was no less curious to find out from whom that groan had issued, and what could induce Mrs. Hill to be there, and at such an hour—she who always appeared to believe the Abbey haunted by nuns and monks, and expressed a particular horror of the armoury ; yet it was now past midnight, and she was in its terrific precincts : resolved, if possible, to fathom this mystery, I set down the lamp and approached the door, but could see nothing, and my ear only caught indistinct sounds, with now and then a deep groan, as of a person in extreme pain : alarmed by a step moving towards the door, I attempted to fly ; part of my dress caught on a coat of mail ; in releasing this, I let the lamp fall from my hand ; the noise alarmed the persons within ; I saw the door open, and finding myself pursued, in my fright I took a wrong direction, which, instead of leading me to my own room, con-

ducted me to the grand staircase. I now found my mistake, but supposing there might yet be fire in the hall, and I might procure a light, I passed down the stairs; the door of the steward's office stood open, and to my great joy I saw the old man writing at his desk; the step of my pursuer sounded behind me; without venturing to turn my head, I rushed into the steward's office, and clasping my arms round him, shrieked—' Save me! save me !'

' In the name of Heaven, child,' said the old man, starting up, ' what has happened to you? why do you look so pale and wild? I thought you safely in bed and fast asleep hours ago; what, child, has thus alarmed you?'

" But before I could reply, the voices of Mrs. Hill and Dessaines were heard—  
' There is no task,' said she, ' under heaven, so difficult as the management of a headstrong young girl; I wonder how her sweet timidity and modesty will account for being in the east corridor at this time of night.'

‘ I in the east corridor ! you cannot mean to accuse me of being there,’ said I, in amazement.

“ Dessaines affected to laugh—‘ Stick to that, mam’selle Lissette,’ said he ; ‘ the count has too much honour to betray the favours of a pretty girl.’

‘ How dare you mention the count to me ?’ replied I ; ‘ you both of you know I was not near the count’s chamber—you know I fled from the——’

‘ We know where you fled from,’ interrupted Mrs. Hill ; ‘ but as it is impossible for me to be always upon the watch, to prevent further imprudence, I shall desire your father to take you home before you bring disgrace on your family, which I am concerned for the credit of, on account of my poor dear sister.’

‘ Good Heaven !’ exclaimed I, ‘ what base insinuations are these ? of what do you presume to accuse me ? I appeal to the count de Syllaric, who, if he has a spark of honour——’

‘ Surely,’ said the count, who then entered the office, ‘ my charming Lissette



does not doubt my honour. Dessaines, what does this uproar mean ?

“ Dessaines was silent ; but Mrs. Hill replied—‘ This girl, count, is under my protection, and I am sorry to find you making assignations.’

‘ This is not true, I hope, Lissette,’ said old Forester ; ‘ I had always a better opinion of your prudence.’

‘ Count de Syllaric can answer that question,’ returned I, indignantly ; ‘ ask him whether he has seen me since I placed his fruit before him after dinner ; and then you, madam, were present.’

“ The count burst into a loud laugh, and turning on his heel, replied—‘ Forester has not yet forgot he was once young himself ; he has seen too much of life, and knows better than to trouble his head with what does not concern him ; he is wiser at his age than to ask idle questions, or put a young girl to the blush : take courage, my pretty Lissette, and do not spoil your bright eyes with weeping ; if your father, Mr. Renaude, wishes an explanation, of

course I shall have no objection to satisfy him : madame Hill, I need not tell you, that love finds an advocate for its imprudences in every tender bosom. Hark ! the clock strikes one ; come, Dessaines, light me instantly to my chamber, before the nuns and friars begin their spectral rounds ;' as he spoke, he kissed my hand, bade me good-night, and humming a tune, departed.

“ The steward, striking his desk with the action of indignation, wished he was a few years younger.

“ Mrs. Hill, with a supercilious smile, inquired what he could possibly mean by that wish ?

‘ I mean,’ replied old Forester, ‘ that had I been twenty years younger, I should have been apt to ask the count a few questions, to which I should have expected a satisfactory reply ; for, as it is, he has placed this poor girl’s character in a very suspicious point of view.’

‘ Suspicious !’ repeated Mrs. Hill, ‘ we differ in opinion on this subject ; I have no suspicion at all ; the case is clear enough

—come, Miss Modesty! if you think proper, I should like to go to my bed.'

'I should like to hear a little about this affair though,' said the steward, 'and what Lissette was so frightened at.'

'You will know all to-morrow morning,' replied Mrs. Hill; 'much more perhaps than will be creditable to your favourite here.'

'Then he will hear much more than the truth,' said I; 'and I will not go to bed, till I have informed Mr. Forester of all the circumstances that occasioned my terror.'

'I insist upon every body going immediately to bed,' said Mrs. Hill; 'a pretty hour indeed to trump up stories! begone to your chamber, boldface! or Dessaines shall carry you thither.'

'It is very late to be sure,' said the steward, yawning; 'well, good-night, child; to-morrow morning you shall tell me all about this strange business; to-morrow morning will do very well.'

"Mrs. Hill dragged me from the office, calling out on Dessaines to assist her—'He may spare himself the trouble,' said I;

‘ good-night, Mr. Forester ; do not suffer your thoughts to harbour a bad opinion of me, for to-morrow morning I will have justice done me—all shall be explained.’ I went to bed, but no sleep visited my eyes; I saw, in the conduct of Mrs. Hill and the count de Syllaric, a plot against my reputation, which, if not refuted, would ruin me for ever with William Forester; ‘ but to-morrow,’ said I, ‘ shall clear my fame—to-morrow shall explain the mystery of the chamber in the armoury.’ But here I was disappointed ; early the following morning the steward was sent for to his brother, who lay at the point of death ; and William Forester was absent on business for his uncle, in a distant part of the kingdom, and no explanation ever took place ; for the count, as if ashamed of his behaviour, carefully avoided me ; Mrs. Hill kept me constantly employed in her room, and whenever I attempted to speak of the affair, treated the whole as a dream of mine, that had no foundation whatever but in my imagination.

“ Three days after, my father arrived at

Norley Abbey, and after being closeted for some hours with the count de Syllaric, commanded me to prepare to return with him to town the following day; the only regret I felt in quitting the Abbey was the absence of William Forester, to whom I did not know where to address a letter. I left a few lines with the housemaid for him, but perhaps they were never delivered; or if they were, Mrs. Hill has taken pains to poison his mind against me, for I have never heard from him since I arrived in London; and no doubt," said Lissette, weeping bitterly, "he has been taught to despise me."

Lord Monteith had been much interested in her narration, given with all the artless energy of truth; he felt for the disappointment of her love, and soothed her grief with such consolation as humanity and a feeling mind suggested.

"On my return home," resumed Lissette, "I found my father's wife confined to her bed by sickness; I was the only person she would suffer to come near or attend her, and after some weeks of suffering,

she expired in my arms; but her death, though it released me from the fatigue of watching and sitting up all night, made no alteration in my confinement—I was never permitted to quit the house but with my father or brother, nor to converse with any person but in their presence: if I ventured to complain of these restrictions, I was told my own conduct had rendered them necessary; that I had, when at Norley Abbey, discovered a disposition that required watchfulness and restraint on the part of my relations, to prevent me from involving them in disgrace.”

“The reason of these restrictions is evident,” said lord Monteith; “your father fears you should betray the little knowledge you have obtained of the secrets of Norley Abbey.”

“Of that I cannot doubt,” resumed Lisette; “the count de Syllarie would not fix his residence at the Abbey, were not some important mystery attached to it; but though I could not penetrate it, I am convinced my father knows the whole.”

“Did lady Gertrude Montalban never

come to the Abbey while you were there?" asked lord Monteith.

"Never but once," replied Lissette, "and then she remained only a few days; and I recollect being in a chamber of the north gallery, when the count and lady Gertrude appeared to be having high words."

"Can you remember their conversation?" asked lord Monteith.

"I heard but little," said Lissette, "though that little would be difficult to forget."

"I know," said lady Gertrude, "I am in your power, and you take advantage of it; I cannot at present raise the money—you must wait till I can procure it."

"I lost the reply of the count; but in a loud key lady Gertrude replied—'To betray me would be ruin to yourself, for I should strip your countship of the title you are so proud of, and hold you up to the world divested of your borrowed plumes.' I heard no more; the approach of some one interrupted their dispute, and to my great relief they walked away; for I trembled

with the fear of being discovered near enough to overhear their conversation. "This very morning," continued Lissette, "I heard my father agreeing with the master of a fishing-smack, who promised to hold himself in readiness on Monday night below Blackfriars Bridge; something possessed me that this fishing-smack was hired to convey you away, and I determined to warn you, that at any rate you might be prepared for the design. Some time ago, I discovered in my room a door closed up, which I took the pains to open, and found it led to a closet quite dark, but for a ray of light which streamed through a small hole, high in the wall, which I found was the keyhole of the lock, on which my hand struck as I raised myself up to look into this room, where I saw you, as I believed, in the act of prayer; at first I considered my discovery totally useless, because I knew it would not aid your escape, my room having no window, but receiving light from my father's chamber, through which I must pass to it, and where Nestor every night keeps guard, and would tear



even me to pieces, were I to venture there uncalled: blaming myself for an idle curiosity, I was quitting the closet, when I trod on the key, which the next morning I placed in the table drawer, with the idea that it might perhaps aid a communication, as it was seldom I could catch an opportunity to write what might be of importance for you to know."

Monteith expressed his grateful sense of Lissette's kindness, and asked her if she could not procure him writing materials?

"I fear not," said Lissette, "for my father would instantly miss the inkstand from the parlour, and I have no paper but what I have cut from an old book—hush! did you not hear a noise?"

"It is only the wind," replied Monteith, "which enters at every aperture and shakes the tapestry, which time has loosened from the walls."

For a moment Lissette listened; but all being still—"Can you not," continued he, "write on different strips of paper, 'lord Monteith is confined here,' and throw them from the windows?"

“No,” replied Lissette, “I cannot do this, for all the windows next the street are fastened down.”

“I have a wife and children, sweet Lissette,” resumed Monteith, “who weep my absence with ceaseless tears; think how they will bless the hand that liberates me—can you not break a pane of glass, as if by accident?”

“Yes, doubtless,” said Lissette, “I could do this; but my father—will you insure to me the safety of my father?”

“Your father will insure his own safety,” thundered a voice from the closet; “and if you do contrive to break a pane of glass, I will contrive to punish you in a way you little dream of.”

Lissette uttered a loud shriek, as Renaude, followed by Nestor growling horribly, stood before them—“Troop to your bed,” said Renaude, swinging his terrified daughter into the closet; “begone—I will settle accounts with you presently.”

“You will not dare to punish her?” said Monteith; “you cannot consider her possessing compassion a crime?”

“ Is it not a crime to seek the ruin of her father ?” said Renaude ; “ but in order to prevent her committing it, I shall take care to put a stop to her making your lordship any more compassionate visits.”

As Renaude spoke, there was a malignant expression in his countenance, that gave Monteith fearful apprehensions for the life of the gentle Lissette ; and he eagerly replied—“ I trust I misconceive your menace ; it cannot be, that you, her father, meditate against her life.”

“ I know not of what use she is in the world,” returned Renaude ; “ my daughter is my property, and have I not a right to act with respect to her as I think proper ?”

“ No,” resumed Monteith, “ not to murder her—not to deprive her of liberty ; against such atrocity the laws of this realm —”

“ I laugh at laws,” interrupted Renaude ; “ they have no power over a man determined to have no dictator but his own sovereign will. It is almost morning,” continued he, yawning, “ and I recommend sleep to your lordship.”

“ Conscious of never having injured or oppressed my fellow-men,” said lord Monteith, “ I can repose in peace; but for you ———”

“ Your lordship may spare the inference,” returned Renaude; “ I am not so dull of apprehension as to mistake your meaning; but if am a villain, it is the cruelty and injustice of the world has made me such, for I am a man whose life has been a series of injuries and oppressions. I once possessed humane and virtuous principles, but they brought me only poverty, disgrace, and ruin; while I respected the laws, they stripped me of the means of existence, and while I was careful not to offend against them, I frequently passed sleepless nights in lamenting my misfortunes, and devising means to provide bread for my family; a revolution of mind, my lord, has produced a wonderful change of circumstances—I enjoy the good things of this life and sleep soundly.”

“ From that sleep,” replied lord Monteith, “ you will assuredly be roused to meet the vengeance of the laws you have

outraged, the punishment of your evil deeds."

Renaude smiled contemptuously—"Never," said he, "never will the law lay hold on me, while death presents so many passages by which its power may be evaded and despised; but I grow weary of this useless prate—Nestor," continued he, rousing the dog that had laid himself at his feet, "Nestor, conduct his lordship to his chamber—perform your office."

Politely the dog took lord Monteith by a part of his dress, and gently, but resolutely, drew him towards the bedchamber.

"Resistance," returned Monteith, "is, I perceive, useless; but Heaven beholds us, and in Heaven I place my trust of speedy deliverance."

"The age of miracles," said Renaude, coldly, "is past; and unless Heaven should work one in your lordship's favour, I shall prevent you from delivering me to the power of the law, by making you my companion to another country."

Renaude, taking the lamp with him, departed; and as Monteith lay in sleepless

agitation, he heard him fastening up the door of the communication, which, had it been left open, he could not have availed himself to escape by ; for though Renaude might have been overpowered, the fangs of Nestor were terrific, and he knew not besides what other inmates of the house might appear to aid in his detention : the information he had received from the unfortunate Lissette convinced him that lady Gertrude Montalban was the enemy of his peace, though he sought in vain in his mind for the cause, except that he had opposed her marriage with Theodore Montalban : the account of Renaude having hired a fishing-smack, himself had confirmed, by declaring his intention of removing him to another country—a scheme Monteith determined to oppose with all his powers ; but as bodily strength in this case would avail but little, he waited with anxious impatience for daylight, that he might again examine the possibility of escaping from the window of his chamber. As soon as it was sufficiently light, Mon-

teith arose, and drawing aside the window-curtain, discovered that a thick snow had fallen during the night; but this did not prevent his seeing that the houses for a long way joined together, and that he should have a perilous scramble over shelving roofs before he could have a chance to reach the street; dangerous and discouraging as this expedient appeared, it was the only one likely to favour his liberation; and as soon as the hour arrived for Renaude to light the lamp, he resolved to adopt it.

When Renaude placed his breakfast before him, Monteith inquired for Lisette.

“Why she is not yet dead,” said Renaude, “and though she talks about her heart breaking, I fancy it is tough and able to bear many a hard tug still. I have a relation in France, the prioress of a convent, and as she does not appear to be good for any thing else, why we will make a nun of her.”

“You will not be so barbarous,” said Monteith, “for surely Lisette will not willingly consent to be immured.”

“Her will!” repeated Renaude, “her

will is out of the question—it will not be consulted—in a convent she will neither endanger my life, nor be a burthen on my care.”

“Poor girl!” exclaimed Monteith, “thy fate is hard.”

“What, to be removed out of the way of evil!” said Renaude; “truly, my lord, you greatly disappoint me; I expected your praise and approval. Here, Lissette, Lissette, what are you about? why don't you come and put the bedchamber to rights?”

Lissette at length made her appearance, her eyes red and swollen with weeping.

“The perverseness of women,” resumed Renaude, “ever was, and will continue, a torment to man: if I had resolved to abandon her, she might have complained with reason; but, on the contrary, I am about to shew a fatherly regard for her soul and body, and yet she is dissatisfied.”

Lissette made no answer but by her tears; and having finished her business in the bedchamber, was ordered by Renaude to go and finish packing up the things.



This command filled lord Monteith with apprehension, lest he should be prevented from escape, by being dragged sooner than he suspected on board the fishing-smack, which appeared but too probable, from the preparation making for departure; but after dinner he was relieved from this fear, by Renaude saying—"Your lordship's appearance is, in truth, rather *outré*; but to-morrow you shall be furnished with a change of habiliments, that when you reach France, you may be fit to appear abroad."

"And wherefore," asked Monteith, "am I to be carried thither?"

"For two reasons," replied Renaude; "the first, obedience to the will of my employer; the second, to secure my own safety; because making you the partner of my flight, I prevent the possibility of your enforcing your laws against me; as soon as we reach Paris, your lordship will be at liberty."

On this assurance Monteith chose not to rely; he believed it given with the intention of preventing any resistance he might be disposed to make against quit-

ting England, and he resolved not to delay his escape.

Renaude having replenished the lamp, quitted the room; and Monteith having listened to his steps along the gallery, began his operations; with a knife he had secreted, he contrived to remove a part of the window-frame, and committing himself to the guidance of Heaven, he ventured out upon the tiles; the snow had melted and froze again, and Monteith found that every step he took was at the imminent danger of his life: at length having nearly reached the end of the houses, over whose roofs he was crawling, he beheld the street, but from the height at which he stood, it was impossible to leap; nor did it seem probable that he should make any person hear from below; as he approached nearer to the edge of the roof, he beheld a window open, and having at great hazard reached it, he resolved to enter, and make his case known to the inhabitants; having dropped from the window into the room, he groped his way to the door, and from thence to the stairs, on

the landing of which a woman suddenly appeared with a light; on seeing Monteith, his dress in tatters, and his hands bleeding from the cuts and scratches he had received in his efforts to preserve himself from being dashed into the street, she shrieked with terror, nor could he persuade her to silence, or that he was not a robber and a murderer; in an instant the house was alarmed, and it being full of lodgers, men, women, and children, soon surrounded Monteith, to whose account of himself, his imprisonment, and escape, no attention was paid; some believed he was a robber, others that he was a madman: at last the tumult having in some degree subsided, Monteith supposed he should be allowed to depart; but perceiving his intention, one of the men gave his opinion that the watchman ought to be called, for honest people were not, in a free country, to be frightened out of their wits by folks in outlandish rags, nor deluded by rodomontade stories, and for that reason he thought it proper that this strange-looking person, whether rogue or mad, should be sent to

the watchhouse, that he might be compelled to give a true account of himself.

The wisdom of this advice was generally applauded and approved, except by one woman, who said it was better to let him go, for he did not look like a thief, and if he was mad, more was the pity, poor soul. The men, however, disdained to be influenced by female opinion; the watchman was called, and lord Monteith fervently thanking Heaven, was conducted to the watchhouse, where, after much entreaty, he procured the indulgence of pen and paper, and a messenger, to bear to the earl of Avondale intelligence, that while it affected and astonished, revived in his soul the hope that the happiness he had despaired of might yet be obtained, and Rosaviya restored to his doting heart with untarnished fame.

## CHAPTER IV.



—————“ You may constrain my person,  
But against the outrage will I appeal  
To holy Heaven ; and though you hide me  
In the earth’s dark centre, the searching eye  
Of watchful Providence will find me out.”

—————“ Hark ! what voice is this,  
That to the wandering moon, in the deep  
Silence of the night, complains ? At this hour,  
As veritable legends tell, spectral forms  
Burst from their cerements, from the grave arise,  
And wail around the scenes of former guilt,  
Or former woes.”

THE appearance of the earl of Avondale at the watchhouse, whither he immediately hastened on the summons of his friend, soon convinced the guardians of the night that lord Monteith was neither murderer, robber, nor madman, but the identical nobleman, on account of whose absence so many advertisements, offering large rewards, continually appeared in every news-

paper in the kingdom. The liberation of lord Monteith, of course, followed the earl's identifying his person; and the police officers received immediate instructions to find out the residence and secure the person of Pierre Renaude, to discover whom, lord Monteith could give no other clue, than referring them to Arnaud Renaude, his son, the editor of the Spy, a fashionable newspaper; but on application being made to him, he positively affirmed that his father and himself having had a disagreement, all intercourse had for many months ceased between them; and that he, neither was acquainted with his place of abode, nor knew his present pursuits.

The police officers, indefatigable in their business, discovered the house where lord Monteith had been confined, but its inhabitants had decamped, and no trace remained to follow them.

The meeting of Avondale and Monteith was highly affecting on both sides; joy and gratitude to Heaven for being restored to liberty, and the society of his family and

friends, filled the bosom of Monteith; while the pleasure experienced by Aven-  
dale was not without alloy, for he remem-  
bered with sincere regret, that there had  
been moments when his suspicion had  
wronged the noble character of Monteith,  
and that the fate of lady Rosaviva de Mo-  
lines was yet involved in fearful mystery.

The delicate state of lady Monteith's  
health rendered the precaution of pre-  
paring her for the happy return of her lord  
necessary; the torn and soiled masquerade  
dress, the only one he had worn since his  
absence, was of itself sufficient proof that  
he had been a prisoner, without the means  
even of procuring a change of apparel; and  
while Julia was rapturously folded to the  
bosom of her husband, tears and humble  
confessions of her jealous and unjust suspi-  
cions mingled with her embraces.

The countess of Hartcourt, having heard  
from lord Monteith the artful conversation  
of the astrologer, and the manner in which  
he was decoyed to follow him, with the  
whole account of his subsequent confine-  
ment, made no scruple to declare her be-

lief that lady Gertrude Montalban was the author and contriver of not only the daring outrage on his person, but was also the enemy, by whose malicious and wicked machinations lady Rosaviva de Molines had been spirited away from her friends, and was held in concealment from their anxious inquiries: in this opinion the earl of Avondale became confirmed, as he reflected on the artless story told by Lisette, the daughter of Pierre Renaude; but as he knew legal redress could not be obtained without positive proof, he was compelled to restrain the impatient indignation that urged him to accuse her of her atrocious conduct, and induced him to adopt the counsel of lady Monteith, who, aware of the character of lady Gertrude, conceived it wisdom to try, whether by a subtle arrangement of questions, she might not be thrown off her guard, and suffer her own confession to give them grounds to proceed on the crimination of herself.

In the first place, the earl of Avondale, remembering what madame Saillons had said on the loss of the rouge purchased for



lady Gertrude, determined to try whether the venality of the Frenchwoman might not be prevailed on to repose with him the *littel* secret she had boasted being the repository of, which secret might perhaps relate to the concealment of his beloved Rosaviva; with this intent he made some purchases of madame Saillons, at her own exorbitant price, and by flattery and the present of a ring he wore on his finger, which dazzled the eyes of madame Saillons, he obtained the *littel* secret, which only informed the earl, that lady Gertrude Montalban had been supplied from her warehouse with a Moorish, two Spanish, a domino, and an astrologer's dresses; but she absolutely denied any knowledge of lady Rosaviva de Molines, and expressed the utmost concern and indignation at her concealment, protesting that if her own sister were concerned in so abominable a transaction, she would without scruple give her up to justice.

The sincerity of madame Saillons was evident, in the exact account of where and how she had been employed during her

short absence from England, and the references she gave him to her correspondents at Paris; but while satisfied that the little Frenchwoman was ignorant in the affair, he was more strongly confirmed in the belief that lady Gertrude Montalban was the enemy of his peace, and the malignant persecutor of the suffering Rosaviva.

Among many others, the name of lady Gertrude Montalban appeared on the list of inquirers after the health of lord Monteith, and the family connexion she so insisted on, as well as politeness, demanded that he should in person acknowledge her attention; Monteith was accompanied in his visit by the earl of Avondale.

Lady Gertrude, to whom the escape of lord Monteith had been made known as soon as discovered, and who had hurried Pierre Renaude and his innocent daughter out of the kingdom, had no wish to meet the man she had so much injured face to face; but the blunder of a newly-hired porter admitted Monteith and Avondale to her presence before she could frame an excuse to avoid them. Affecting indispo-

sition, to conceal the confusion of guilt, she continued sitting in a part of the room thrown into shadow by the drapery of a large curtain ; but through all her affected joy at the return of lord Monteith, it was very discernible that the mention of Pierre Renaude occasioned a tremor in her voice, and agitation of frame, though with intrepid effrontery she denied all knowledge of any such person ; but confessed that at the earnest and repeated solicitation of the count de Syllaric, she had patronized Arnaud Renaude, and had used her influence with her numerous friends to promote his interest and establishment as a bookseller, and give circulation and celebrity to the paper which he so charmingly and cleverly edited—" And I reflect," said lady Gertrude, " with much satisfaction on the services I have rendered this deserving emigrant, for it is universally acknowledged that the Spy is one of the most fashionable, as well as the wittiest production of the present day."

" Yes," replied the earl of Avondale, " to the shame of the nation it is fashion-

able; and if promulgating the basest scandal—if defaming worth and innocence—if inventing falsehoods to destroy domestic peace, intitle it to the eulogium your ladyship bestows on it, the *Spy* certainly stands pre-eminent for wit.”

Lady Gertrude blushed through her rouge, played with the lapdog, and endeavoured to change the subject by talking of the effect the weather had on English constitutions.

It was the intention of lord Monteith to bring Arnaud Renaude to strict and severe account for the many paragraphs in the *Spy*, asserting and affirming his elopement with lady Rosaviva de Molines; but not wishing to give lady Gertrude a hint of his design, lest he should quit the country also, and defy the laws he had outraged, he let the subject pass, and requested lady Gertrude to inform him where the count de Syllaric was to be found.

Lady Gertrude could give him no information—she had really no knowledge of the count’s residence.

“ This ignorance of the abode of so inti-

mate a friend appears rather strange ; you will pardon me," said lord Monteith, "if I add incredible ; if I err not, when you introduced him to me, you told me the count de Syllaric had assisted at the funeral of Mr. Montalban, and was your escort to England."

Lady Gertrude found it necessary to apply a cambric handkerchief to her eyes, at the same time apologizing for her weakness, by saying, "the mention of the name of that dear and lamented friend, whom I am for ever bereaved of, always affects my nerves."

Lord Monteith, to this affectation of tender sensibility, gave no other answer than a contemptuous smile, which lady Gertrude had too much cunning to notice : the earl of Avondale, affording the same degree of credit to her susceptibility and fine feelings that his friend did, observed—"Lady Carricksford commences life gaily—fetes, concerts, and balls, have already declared the happy festivity of her marriage."

"She has peculiar good fortune," returned lady Gertrude, raising her eyes to

his face ; “ she has married the man of her heart.”

These words were uttered with a deep sigh ; but regardless of the meaning her look and sigh were intended to convey, the earl resumed—“ I suppose your ladyship has an invitation to the masked ball on the twentieth of the next month.”

“ Yes,” replied lady Gertrude, “ I have the pleasure to find myself in the early remembrance of all my friends on these occasions ; among the most intimate of whom, I have the honour to rank the countess of Carricksford.”

“ And what character,” inquired the earl, “ does your ladyship intend to assume ? for being provided with such a variety of costumes, you can delude as a Moor, a Spaniard, an astrologer, or a black domino.”

These were home questions ; and as such, were felt by the guilty mind of lady Gertrude ; but even now her assurance did not forsake her, and affecting to smile, she instantly replied—“ I am really diffident of my own abilities, and doubt whether I am

sufficiently graceful for a Moor, whether I could assume gravity enough for a Spaniard, or have science equal to supporting the character of an astrologer—a domino will do best, I believe; but as to my being provided with any of these costumes, you greatly err, I promise you,” continued she, “for whatever habit I shall determine to wear must be purchased.”

“I can readily believe this,” said Lord Monteith, “for it is not likely that Pierre Renaude allowed his daughter to offend you by returning the Moorish habit you presented her to appear in at the duchess of Winterton’s masquerade; neither did her brother Arnaud, I presume, send back to your ladyship the astrologer’s habit, in which I was decoyed to the imprisonment I suffered in his father’s house.”

Lady Gertrude’s seat felt uneasy, as the earl of Avondale, pursuing the subject, said—“May I presume to inquire where your ladyship purchased the Spanish dress, exactly similar to Monteith’s, in which Pierre Renaude paraded the room with his daughter, whose figure and costume so

exactly resembled the unfortunate Rosaviva de Molines, that the public eye was completely deceived, and so duped as to believe that one of the most virtuous of her sex, defying the laws of Heaven and man, had eloped with the husband of her friend?"

"Such a belief most certainly prevailed," replied lady Gertrude, "but to the misrepresentation I have in no way been accessory; and I beg leave to assure you, that I never presented either Arnaud Renaude, or his sister Lissette, with habits for the duchess of Winterton's masquerade; so far from having a knowledge of the girl you mention, I never heard till now that Arnaud Renaude had a sister."

"And yet," returned Monteith, "without even knowing this girl existed, you can at once fix upon her Christian name; but if you will take the trouble to recollect, you will find she was dismissed from Norley Abbey, on account of having betrayed a disposition to penetrate the secrets of the armoury chamber."

The face of lady Gertrude wore an ex-



pression of terror and malignancy ; in an agitated voice, she replied—" Secrets of the armoury chamber ! I never heard of any secret it contained—I never heard of Lisette Renaude—and I know not of what crimes you mean to accuse me—perhaps of murder."

" Gracious Heaven forbid !" exclaimed Avondale ; " the life of the angelic Rosaviva, I trust, is safe."

This exclamation, fervid and tender, did not tend to calm the rage of lady Gertrude, who resumed—" It is evident your visit here was intended and concerted to insult me."

" No, wretched woman," said Monteith sternly ; " respect for the name of the buried friend, whose infatuation gave you, unworthy as you were, a title to his name, influenced our visit ; myself and the earl of Avondale have strong reasons to believe you can direct us to lady Rosaviva de Molines ; we came to try if it was possible to touch your bosom with remorse."

Lady Gertrude rose, threw on them a look of scorn and indignation, and would

have quitted the room; but the earl of Avondale, placing himself between her and the door, prevented her design, at the same time saying—"Lady Gertrude Montalban, be advised—this is the white moment your good genius offers to preserve you from public infamy, and disgraceful punishment; declare the place of lady Rosaviva's concealment, and in her name, and in the name of all her friends, I promise \_\_\_\_\_"

"Ruffian, let me pass!" shrieked lady Gertrude; "help there! where are my people? am I to suffer insult and imprisonment in my own house?"

The earl of Avondale moved from the door—"Come, Monteith," said he, "snatching up his hat, "let us begone, for I perceive it were a task of equal folly to hope to soften adamant, as that woman's bosom; let us begone."

"As quickly as you please," replied lady Gertrude, "and when you next honour me with a visit, I trust the recollection of my rank and sex will preserve me from insult."

“ When rank is degraded by crimes,” returned lord Monteith, “ it ceases to claim respect ; and when a female forgets the softness, the innocence, and delicacy of her sex, she is no longer to be considered a woman, but as a wretch, whom malignant passions have transformed to a fiend.”

The eventful night of the masquerade, when lady Rosaviva de Molines suffered herself to be led from the side of lady Louisa Feversham, she certainly believed herself conducted by the earl of Avondale, and without the least suspicion or hesitation, entered the carriage, the step of which was let down, and in which she beheld already seated two ladies, whom she believed to be the countess of Hartcourt and lady Monteith.

The concern the gentle, compassionate Rosaviva felt for the indisposition of the pretended countess, and the closeness of the carriage, the blinds being carefully drawn up, prevented her at first from discovering that the voice which replied to her questions was unlike lady Monteith's; nor would the idea of deception at all have

entered her mind, but from the uncommon circumstance of the countess making no sort of answer to her repeated inquiries after the manner in which this unfortunate indisposition had seized her, and where and how she felt affected? Obtaining no reply to her questions, lady Rosaviva, in much alarm, exclaimed—"Merciful Heaven! she has either fainted, or is dead!" at the same time she endeavoured to let down the blind next her, but which she was unable to effect from its being previously fastened.

The ladies now bursting into a laugh, she was filled with consternation, for she discovered she was betrayed by a strata-gem, the drift of which she could not understand, and that her companions were absolute strangers, who were hurrying her from the metropolis, and the protection of her friends; to her repeated demand of whether they were conveying her, and by whose order? she was told they were forbid to answer questions of that sort; they had received instructions to provide her with every thing she wished on her journey,

but for an explanation of its motives, she must wait with patience till their employer chose to elucidate.

For some moments Rosaviva wept in silence, but recollecting the weakness and inefficacy of sorrow, she breathed a mental prayer to the Great Disposer of human events; and resigning herself to the will of Providence, determined to meet her trials with fortitude; nothing doubting but she should be enabled to overcome them, and gain deliverance from her present difficulties.

Refreshments were offered her, of which she partook; and after remaining many hours shut up in the carriage, during which time the horses had been three times changed, they stopped, and she was requested to alight; on the door being opened, Rosaviva perceived it was moonlight, and that they stood before a lone house on the edge of a common; she cast her eyes round in every direction, but no hope of delivery presenting, she was compelled to follow her companions to the house, where an elderly woman, who appeared to have

been waiting their arrival, immediately met them with a light, and led the way up a steep staircase, where having shewn a dark, comfortless-looking bedchamber, she left them, without saying more than—

“Supper will be ready anon.”

“I declare, Mrs. Hill,” said the female, who had personated lady Monteith, “this place is enough to give one the vapours.”

Lady Rosaviva cast a melancholy glance round the bare walls, and asked if their journey was to terminate there?

“No, Heaven be praised,” said Mrs. Hill, “not at such a hut as this, or they would never get me to stay, I promise you.”

A chest stood in the middle of the room, to which she applied a key, and drawing out some night-clothes, she presented them to Rosaviva, observing, she might probably wish to retire to rest; she then opened the door of a small closet, which was just large enough to contain a bed, saying that was prepared for her ladyship; she then called aloud on the woman of the house, by the name of Margery Dickens, who ap-

pearing with a light, she inquired if the supper was ready? Being answered in the affirmative, Mrs. Hill proposed sending up the breast of a fowl to lady Rosaviva; but she declined taking supper, and the females departed, locking the door after them.

Being left alone, Rosaviva hastened to examine the windows, but escape seemed absolutely impossible; she then began to revolve the probable motive of her being brought to that lone house; the richness of her dress, the costly diamonds with which it was ornamented, presented to her mind the probability of robbery; and to hide the robbery was it not likely they would murder her? A sick faintness for many moments deprived her even of the power to reflect; but the danger and loneliness of her situation again recurring to her mind, she began to revolve the possibility of escape; placing the light in the most remote corner of the room, she again tried the casement, but it was too strongly fastened to yield to her weak hand; and as far as her sight could reach without, all

appeared wild, dreary, and unpromising of assistance; for no habitation met her view, and all she could discover was a wild heath, on which a thick snow lay, silvered by the cold beams of a waning moon.

“From Heaven alone,” said Rosaviva, raising her tearful eyes to the sky, over which huge clouds of fleecy whiteness were wandering; “from Heaven alone can I hope assistance. Oh, my beloved parents! you are released from this bad world; yet, if you are permitted, hover over and guard your Rosaviva in this hour of peril!” She then sank on her knees—“Eye me, blest Providence! and square my trials to my strength; from Heaven alone,” continued Rosaviva, “can I hope relief; to its guardianship I commit myself.”

She then threw off the Moorish habit, and laying it across the chest, she left it, in the hope that they would be satisfied with securing the diamonds, without any resistance or opposition on her part, and spare her life—“Perhaps,” said Rosaviva, “they will be glad to escape with the plunder.



and leave me in this desolate spot : but let me not anticipate evil—let me not rashly or weakly yield to despair; Providence will not forsake me—the watchful eye of Heaven surveys at a glance every spot in the wide world; let me not think I am hidden from its care—let me not presume to doubt its protection.”

In this frame of mind, relying on the Power, without whose permission “a sparrow cannot fall to the ground,” Rosaviva threw herself on the humble pallet prepared for her repose; though coarse, it was perfectly clean, and the hempen sheets retained the pleasing fragrance of the lavender in which they had been laid; but though fatigued in mind and body, anxiety and dread kept her waking; she thought of the friends from whom she had been thus mysteriously separated; and with the prayers she breathed for her own safety, were mingled fervent aspirations for their happiness.

A sentiment, which she blushed to acknowledge to herself, had induced her for some time past to wear the earl of Avon-

dale's picture on her bosom; it still hung there; and as the idea, that it was likely they should meet no more agonized her imagination, she pressed the inanimate resemblance of him she truly loved with aching tenderness to her lips, while tears fell in torrents from her eyes, wetting the pillow on which her cheek reclined: while thus a prey to fear, regret, and tenderness, she was startled by hearing a clock strike; as she counted the strokes, she found it wanted yet an hour to midnight; the sounds of merriment too arose from below; they were laughing and singing, and she could plainly distinguish the voices of men, harsh and deep.

Shuddering with terror, Rosaviva listened, and believed her last moment was near at hand; yet even in this perturbed state sleep overcame her, and she remained in happy forgetfulness till the next morning, when her repose was disturbed by Mrs. Hill informing her it was time to rise, that they might pursue their journey, as they had many long miles to travel before they reached home. Having the night before re-

ceived an intimation that it was useless to ask questions, Rosaviva arose, and coming into the room where she had left her clothes, she found the other female, whom Mrs. Hill called Alice, stripping the costly adornments from her Moorish habit; and hanging on a chair she saw a plain peasant's dress, which Mrs. Hill civilly requested her to put on, observing, she would be less stared at in that than if she kept on the masquerade dress.

In this opinion Rosaviva acquiesced, and silently arrayed herself in the russet garb that had been provided for her.

“ Well,” said Alice, making the splendid ornaments into a parcel, “ beauty is beauty, put what sort of disguises you will on it; and her ladyship there looks handsomer in that coarse stuff, than any of the ladies did at the masquerade in all their finery.”

Mrs. Hill affected to laugh—“ You are no great judge of beauty, I believe,” said she, viewing her own person in a small bit of glass stuck against the wall; “ but come, as you have got your own things on, suppose you

go and see if the breakfast is ready. I am sure I shall look quite like a fright, for how can any body pretend to dress at such a glass as this? well, for my part, I wonder how people can contrive to live in such a place, where there is nothing at all fit for the toilet of a lady—no, not so much as a glass that is big enough to see her face in.”

Rosaviva cast a glance on Mrs. Hill, who was taking much pains to adorn her meagre person, and set off her faded charms to advantage, on which she appeared to gaze with much complacency. Being told that breakfast was waiting, Mrs. Hill caught up the parcel containing the diamonds, and, to the great surprise of Rosaviva, said she had better keep them in her own possession, for she should not choose to be answerable for them.

This conduct gave a new turn to Rosaviva's ideas, to whom it now appeared that robbery was not the object for which she had been torn from her friends; but she was at that moment prevented from further conjecture, by their descending to a large parlour situated on the other side the

house, from the windows of which she saw a road across the heath, and a carriage prepared for their journey ; without any sort of ceremony, her companions seated themselves at the table, which was plentifully laid out, observing they had a long way to go, and had best not lose time.

Rosaviva took a cup of coffee, and eat of the hot cakes, which were very good ; they then entered the carriage, and travelled with incredible speed till about noon, when they stopped in the middle of a wood, at a mean hut, where only two wretched-looking old women appeared ; here a basket of provisions was drawn from the seat of the carriage, and the travellers dined ; a bottle of wine was also produced ; but fearful of stratagems, of which her fancy had been full all the day, Rosaviva chose to drink water only. On the order being given to prepare the carriage, one of the old women, to whom Mrs. Hill had been talking, observed the melancholy looks of Rosaviva, and said she seemed mighty delicate—" Why, lauk, how white her hands be ! why her don't look a bit as if her had

been used to milk cows, or scrub oaken floors—poor thing! her seems sad dolesome, and the Abbey is not like——”

Mrs. Hill would have stopped all discourse about the Abbey, but the other old woman instantly said—“When I was a young girl, I lived laundry-maid at the Abbey, and folks used to say it was haunted by friars and nuns; to be sure I never saw the spirits—not I; but Philip Wansworth, who was a-courting me then—and a very likely lad he was in that day, to be certain—used to say he did often meet a tall pale-faced man in the oak chamber; and that once he told madam about it, and she was very angry indeed, and called him a fool and a liar; and some of the servants said it was her cousin, sir Geoffry, that used to come in secret to see her, when master was out of the way, because they was bitter foes to one another about Beechclump mannor; and others used to say it was a spirit Philip saw, for the old Abbey was full of them; but spirit or no spirit, my Philip used to declare he never could hear

his step on the floor, see him when he would ; nor never could find out where he went, but always lost him just at the——”

“ Bless me !” said Alice, staring at the old woman, “ can this be true ?”

“ Yes,” said Mrs. Hill, “ true as you live, the Abbey is haunted sure enough ; but then I am so used to the apparitions, that I don’t mind them, but let them come and go without the least notice or concern.”

“ Dear me !” said the old woman, “ that is very surprising—not mind the spirits ! why the sight of one would be the death of me for certain ; well, to be sure, what courage you must have !”

“ Courage !” repeated Alice ; “ yes, truly, and much more than belongs to me, I promise you—why if I was to meet the tall pale-faced gentleman in the oak chamber, I should never be myself again.”

“ But you do not seem to notice,” replied Mrs. Hill, “ that it was only in the oak chamber that Philip Wansworth used to see him, and you know that suite of rooms is shut up ; in the time of Oliver Cromwell there was bloody work at the

Abbey, and I have heard of some cavalier who was murdered in that oak chamber; and I recollect myself having seen a light stream from under the door, and hearing a noise like the clashing of swords in the chamber; but, as I said before, I am so accustomed to see sights, and hear noises at the Abbey, I think nothing at all about it."

The carriage being now ready, they proceeded on their journey, and Rosaviya was compelled to listen to a long series of dismal improbabilities, the invention of superstition, and to which only the grossest ignorance could give credence. At the close of day, Rosaviya beheld an expanse of water, on the margin of which they travelled for some time, till the road branching to the left, her eye caught a view of antique spires and battlements.

"Heaven be praised!" said Mrs. Hill, "we are within sight of home."

The carriage drove beneath an archway, where a pair of massy iron gates delivered them to a gloomy avenue of firs and yews, which extended near half-a-mile; and under



the shadow of dark melancholy boughs the carriage moved along till it arrived at a second archway, the picturesque beauties of which, in happier circumstances, would have been greatly admired by the tasteful eye of lady Rosaviva; it was so thickly covered with mantling ivy, as entirely to conceal the rude stone-work of which it was formed, from which the ivy hung in shining and graceful festoons, affording shelter to numerous birds, who at that hour were hurrying to the verdant shelter. Beyond this romantic archway appeared a heavy Gothic building of gray stone, of very ancient architecture, whose pointed battlements and spire-crowned turrets seemed to have braved the storms of time, and the violence of civil commotion, without having sustained any very material injury.

As soon as the carriage stopped in the courtyard, the door was opened by a young man very foppishly dressed, whom Mrs. Hill seemed delighted to see, and whom she familiarly addressed by the name of Dessaines; their mutual salutations and

congratulations being past, Mrs. Hill having taken Dessaines apart, whispered something in his ear; he then conducted them to a door in an angle of the building, which opened on a long stone passage; at that hour, nearly dark, sad and silent, Rosaviva followed the steps of her unfeeling companions, to an arcade that wound round the whole building; here Mrs. Hill desired Alice to remain with lady Rosaviva, while she proceeded with monsieur Dessaines to the servants' hall to procure lights; but Alice loudly and vehemently protested against remaining, and declared she would not stay there if they would give her the whole world—"Stay here!" said Alice; "not I, by my faith! why it is almost dark—and yonder," pointing to an opening in the arcade, "yonder is the entrance to the chapel, and from that aisle the nuns and friars come every night in procession to the state-hall: stay here indeed! no, not I, truly; not if I should be crowned queen of all England."

As she spoke, she ran with her utmost speed after Mrs. Hill and Dessaines, call-

ing after them to stop, leaving the wretched, wearied Rosaviva to the anguish of her own thoughts, which dwelt not on the idle and improbable legends they had been relating of supernatural appearances, but on the peril of her own situation; faint and sick, utterly hopeless of escape, her head sank against a pillar of the arcade, and resigning herself to the death she believed she was brought there to meet, her pale lips murmured—"Heaven, thy will be done!"

In a few moments Mrs. Hill returned, with a pretty-looking young girl bearing a lamp, by whom she was led through several offices to a staircase of oak, polished like a mirror; having mounted this staircase, they traversed a gallery hung with whole-length pictures of fierce-looking warriors in armour, and females in the costume of the earliest times.

The distressful state of Rosaviva's mind made her pass these curious paintings without notice, and having ascended a second flight of stairs, she was shewn into a large antique chamber, the ceiling of which was ornamented with grotesque figures very

rudely carved; the furniture, of crimson velvet embroidered and fringed, had once been magnificent, but yielding to the remorseless power of time, was now moth-eaten, faded, and tarnished.

A good fire blazed cheerfully on the hearth, and Cicely having lit the wax-candles that stood on a rich marble slab, Rosaviva was enabled to view her prison. Mrs. Hill, in the mean time, drew a heavy arm-chair to the fireside, and having invited Rosaviva to sit, with a low courtesy, said—"Your ladyship is welcome to Norley Abbey."

Rosaviva started, and, in tremulous accents, repeated—"Norley Abbey! am I awake! At length then I discover my persecutor is lady Gertrude Montalban."

Mrs. Hill would gladly have stolen from the room; but lady Rosaviva recovering her spirits, demanded why this outrage had been committed on her person, and wherefore she was made a prisoner?

Mrs. Hill protested her absolute ignorance, hoped her ladyship would find every thing comfortable in her apartments; that

Cicely having orders to wait on her ladyship, she hoped her farther attendance would be excused, as her presence was much wanted among the domestics ; without waiting a reply, she then hastily withdrew.

Rosaviva, when alone, gave way to the sorrow she had struggled to conceal from the unfeminine wretches, who had been depraved enough to be made the instrument of another's baseness ; but being no longer observed, she gave way to her feelings, and wept long and bitterly ; the loss of her parents, her unhappy marriage, her separation from the friends dear to her heart, who were in ignorance of her fate, and her own incapacity to guess the motives that actuated lady Gertrude Montalban to imprison her—all passed in rapid succession through her brain ; at length she was roused by hearing some one sob near her, when, raising her head, she beheld Cicely standing near her, her rosy cheeks covered with tears.

Rosaviva tenderly inquired what had happened, and why she wept ?

The poor girl, with artless kindness, replied—"Nothing has happened to me, my lady; for I, to be sure, am far better off than ever I thought to be, being taken from a poor hut, to wait upon such a grand lady as madam Hill tells me you be; no sure, nothing has happened to me—I only cries because I see you cry, just to keep you company like, because my heart feels sore to see you take on so."

Rosaviva was pleased to discover an instance of compassionate feeling; she dried her own eyes, and spoke kindly to Cicely, of whom she endeavoured to learn why she had been spirited away from her friends and brought thither; but Cicely was utterly ignorant in the business; she had never in her life seen lady Gertrude Montalban—she had never, till the present day, been at Norley Abbey, though her mother, a widow, with five children, all younger than herself, lived in a miserable hut on the domain.

Cicely had been hired, by order of Mrs. Hill, to wait on lady Rosaviva de Molines, on account of her simplicity; and one con-

dition of her *sérvicé* was, that she was never to quit the Abbey during the time lady Rosaviva remained there: finding that she could give her no information, lady Rosaviva consented to Cicely's advice, and to divert her sorrow, took a survey of the suite of apartments that formed her prison; it consisted of the drawing-room into which she had been first shewn, a bed-chamber, the furniture of which was black oak, and green damask, and though of very antique make, was still in good preservation; within this was a small closet, which contained a pallet for Cicely.

Rosaviva expressed satisfaction at this contiguity, and passed on to the last chamber, which was an oratory; the wainscot, reaching to the circular dome, was carved in figures of angels dropping crowns on the heads of saints, and bearing them on their wings to heaven; under one of the narrow-pointed windows, formed of small squares of stained glass, stood an altar of the same dark oak, carved with various devices emblematic of religious faith, and over it a large crucifix of marble; on the

altar lay a missal and rosary, on the large beads of which were stains of a deep yellow colour.

As Rosaviva examined the rosary, Cicely said, that madam Hill had told her that room was built on purpose for people to say their prayers in; "but, for my part," observed she, "I should much rather say mine by my bedside, for the figures on the wainscot do frighten me—I am such a silly oaf, for all I know that they are only wood; and then them beads, madam Hill told me they belonged to saint somebody—I forget her name, and the yellow stains that be on them was drops of her blood."

"Her blood!" repeated Rosaviva, "surely you mistake."

"No, my lady, it is no mistake; this saint was one of the nuns belonging to Norley Abbey, and she used to cut deep gashes in her flesh, that she might suffer pain in this world for her sins; and these stains were a drop of blood for every wound she gave herself."

Rosaviva shuddered at this relation, which, though horrible, was likely enough



to be true, in that dark era of ignorance and superstition when Norley Abbey was a religious sanctuary.

“ I hope, my lady,” continued Cicely, “ you are not so cruel to yourself as to hack and cut your own flesh ; but you are no nun, to be sure.”

“ Nor any saint,” thought Rosaviva.

“ Though to be sure,” resumed Cicely, “ madam Hill told me that folks now-a-days was grown wiser than to punish themselves in such a barbarous way ; and that though you was a Roman Papish, I had no need to be afraid that you would do yourself or me any hurt.”

Rosaviva smiled, and assured the simple girl that she had nothing to apprehend, for she was not a Papist, but professed the same faith that she did.

Cicely declared that she was quite happy to find she was not a Roman Papish.

“ I am sorry,” replied Rosaviva, “ to find you prejudiced against any religious denomination ; be assured, among that sect you call Roman Papists, there are as many worthy and pious persons as we shall find

in our own persuasion ; and that however Catholics might consider it necessary to punish their own sins and frailties, by inflicting pain on themselves, they would never compel you to do penance with them."

" Well," said Cicely, " I am very glad madam Hill made a mistake, for though the Roman Papishes might not do me any harm, yet I had rather not live with them, because I could never like their ways; falling atop of their knees to worship carved images, which are only cut out of a piece of wood; and praying to pictures and such like nonsense, which is nothing better, our pastor says, than downright idleness."

Rosaviva smiled, and perceiving Cicely look at a piece of silver that hung from her neck, she asked what treasure it was she so carefully preserved in her bosom?

Cicely replied, it was an old coin that her brother had given her the day he died, with a strict charge, whenever she saw it, to pray for the peace of his soul.

" And when you obey this injunction,"

asked Rosaviva, "do you pray to the silver coin?"

"To the coin! dear me! no, my lady; the coin only reminds me of my brother's request—my prayers are to God."

"And be assured, Cicely," said lady Rosaviva, "that in like manner, the images and pictures preserved by Catholics are no farther honoured by them than as memorials of pious acts performed by good and virtuous persons, and as remembrancers of those religious duties which the best of human kind are but too prone, not only to neglect, but even to forget."

Having returned to the drawing-room, lady Rosaviva saw a small trunk, which she had not before observed, and inquiring of Cicely from whence it came, was informed it was her ladyship's clothes; having opened it, she found it contained a few changes of linen, and the parcel with the diamonds, which on quitting the carriage she had left on the seat—"Gladly," said Rosaviva, "would I give these for liberty; but, alas! it appears I am equally excluded

from the efforts of humanity, and the services of cupidity."

While reflecting on her hopeless situation, supper was brought in by Dessaines; but his countenance, to her fancy, bore the lines of determined villany, with an expression of cunning that deterred her from making an attempt to soften him in her favour, or bribing him to aid her escape.

The attendance of Dessaines had been the incitement of curiosity; he wished to have a sight of lady Rosaviva's face, of which he spoke in such terms of rapture to Mrs. Hill, that her jealousy took the alarm; and under pretence of lady Rosaviva objecting to his bringing in her meals, she prevented the actual design of Dessaines, who having a presentiment of the failure of the count de Syllaric's scheme, would have betrayed his cause, and enriched himself by procuring the liberty of lady Rosaviva de Melines.

At an early hour, Rosaviva, having secured the door of her chamber, retired to bed, where sleep, invited by fatigue, soon charmed her mind to a forgetfulness of

sorrow; and the faint beams of the sun playing through the small panes of glass, of which her casement was composed, was the first object that caught her eye when she awoke: calling to Cicely, she found she had been up a long time, but the key of the bedchamber being under the head of lady Rosaviva, she could not gain access to the drawing-room; this however was very soon arranged; and according to the instructions she had received, when any thing was wanting from below, she rang a bell, and breakfast was brought up, and placed on a marble slab near the door.

Lady Rosaviva was soon arrayed in one of the simple robes that had been provided for her, and when she had taken her coffee, she repaired to the oratory, to offer up her prayers to Heaven; this duty being performed, she opened the casement of the window opposite the altar, and found her apartments were in a turret of the Abbey, the base of which was washed by a river, which rolled its blue waves many feet below the window from which she leaned; the opposite shore presented a dreary pro-

spect—a chain of hills covered with snow, where no sign of habitation was visible.

Rosaviva sighed as she listened to the water rippling at the base of the turret, and saw the impossibility of escape; from these sorrowful reflections she was summoned by Cicely to the drawing-room, who told her that a gentleman, dressed very fine, and smelling just like a fresh-gathered posy, wanted to speak to her: supposing it some one of the domestics, whom the ignorance of Cicely had converted into a gentleman, Rosaviva was not a little surprised to meet the count de Syllaric, who rose at her entrance, and appeared at a loss to open his business. The demand of lady Rosaviva, to know why she had been brought to Norley Abbey, drew from the count a declaration of his love; and that, hopeless of success while she was surrounded with lovers, he had ventured upon a romantic expedient he had planned to remove her from amidst his rivals, that he might have free access to her ear, and woo her to make him happy.

Rosaviva cast on him a look of scorn,

and asked, if he thought-tearing her from her friends, and depriving her of liberty, was likely to promote his plan, or dispose her to approve his suit?

“Promise that you will be mine,” said the count, attempting to take her hand, “and I will convey you to town immediately.”

Rosaviva disdainfully repulsed the familiarity of de Syllaric—“With me, count de Syllaric,” replied she, “a promise is sacred; and I shall be careful how I pledge my word to what my heart would never allow me to fulfil.”

“Your heart is Avondale’s,” said the count, “but consider, lady, his faith is different to yours; and what happiness can you expect would result from an union with an heretic? This reflection will, I trust, have a proper weight in your mind, and induce you to look with a more favourable eye on me, who am of the same faith as yourself.”

“There you greatly err, count,” replied Rosaviva, “for I am not a Catholic.”

“How!” said the count, “is it possible

that since your short residence in England, you are become an apostate?"

"No," replied Rosaviva, "I was bred in the Protestant faith, and shall continue in it as long as I live."

"The difference of faith," resumed the count, "is certainly an important consideration; but you are yet very young—you may see your error and be converted."

"Never," replied Rosaviva; "your declaration of love I consider an insult, and I demand to be released from this confinement."

"Demand!" repeated the count, "you forget, lady, that you are not now with the silly old countess of Hartcourt, where your requests were laws; you are now at Norley Abbey, and only on one condition will be allowed to pass its gates."

"And that condition," said Rosaviva—"name it."

"Can you not guess it?" asked de Sylaric; "does not your heart whisper, that by fettering me, you would obtain emancipation—that by bestowing on me your hand——"



Rosaviva rose with an air of dignity, and moving towards the inner apartment, said—"Our conference, count, has lasted long enough." She then closed the door of the bedchamber, and gave way to the tears she had with difficulty suppressed in the presence of the count, who left the turret not altogether dissatisfied with his reception, for he had expected to meet rage and menace; and on the contrary, lady Rosaviva had used only expostulation; and though she had declined his suit, it was in terms so mild and gentle, that he encouraged the hope of yet being a successful wooer.

While the count was encouraging hope, the wretched Rosaviva was nearly sunk in despair, to which Cicely not a little contributed, by weeping with her, and declaring there was no possible way to escape.

From the repeated visits of the count de Syllaric, Rosaviva learned lady Gertrude Montalban's passion for the earl of Avondale, and from the newspapers he constantly left on her table, she was informed of the absence of lord Monteith, and that it was

generally believed that they had eloped together.

As Rosaviva read these infamous fabrications, she wept more for the anguish of lady Monteith than for her own ruined fame—"Surely," said she, "the heart of the noble Avondale will never be ensnared by this wicked woman—I know he used to dislike her, but she is so artful, she may wind a mesh round him which he will not be able to escape—he may be induced to marry her; surely Heaven will not permit such a sacrifice—taught to believe that I am the companion of lord Monteith, his heart assuredly despises me; alas, alas! if it ever felt for me respect or affection, those generous sentiments are, by the malice of my enemy, changed to hatred and contempt. The countess of Hartcourt too, my second mother, she believes me a wretch stained with guilt, and totally unworthy her friendship; lady Monteith, miserable by the absence of her husband, and deceived by base fabrications, amidst her tears and anguish, heaps execrations on me. Wretched, wretched Rosaviva! thy

cup of affliction overflows; thou art, though innocent even of the intention of evil, become odious to thy friends; and oh, terrible idea! thou art hateful to Avondale, sunk in the estimation of the beloved of thy soul!"

By letting lady Rosaviva see that her reputation was ruined in the opinion of the world, the count de Syllaric, building much on the gentleness and timidity of her nature, supposed she would gladly accept his hand, and readily consent to depart with him to her own possessions in South America, as in England she had experienced so much injury and injustice, and had nothing to expect but insult and scorn—as her criminal intercourse with lord Monteith appeared to gain belief, even from those who had been most intimate with her, and had once been proud to call themselves her friends.

But when he next renewed the subject of his love, and hinted at the wisdom of her marrying him immediately, and returning to Peru, she repulsed his audacity with more than usual spirit and indigna-

tion, expressing her utter dislike and contempt of him, and declaring that she would never, much reason as she had to dislike England, return to her native country with tarnished fame; that in the midst of her distresses, persecuted, slandered, and imprisoned, her soul was cheered with the assurance that she should yet compel her enemies to do her justice—"The vengeance of Heaven," said lady Rosaviva, "though delayed, will strike! yes, count de Syllaric, yourself and lady Gertrude Montalban will yet meet the punishment of your crimes."

The count laughed, and replied, he hoped to meet the reward of his enterprising courage.

Some weeks had worn away in solicitation and urgent entreaties on the part of the count de Syllaric, and refusals on that of lady Rosaviva, when, one morning, he appeared before her, prepared for a journey; again he urged her to put an end to the confinement of which she complained, by consenting to become his wife.

"Never," said Rosaviva, "though my

imprisonment continue till my death, never will I form an alliance with the base calumniator of my fame—the murderer, for ought I know, of lord Monteith—but assuredly the destroyer of the reason of his innocent wife. Away, wretch! remove from me thy abhorred presence, and let this be my final answer—never will I form an alliance of any sort with a being so degraded by crime, so hateful to my soul, so odious to my sight, as count de Syllaric.”

The rage of his soul flashed from the eyes of the count; the scorn of countenance that had accompanied the words of lady Rosaviva stung him to the quick—“As yet,” replied he, “you have only confinement to complain of; respect, attendance, have been yours: but these indulgences may be withheld—these apartments may be exchanged for others, where a sunbeam never entered; in the dungeons of the Abbey,” continued the count, “you may adopt an humbler tone—your pride may be subdued—methods may be found to compel your acquiescence with my wishes.”

“Not in England, count,” replied Rosa-

viva, calmly, "not in this land of freedom, can you find a priest who would dare enforce the marriage ceremony, or pronounce me your wife, unless my own lips ratified the engagement."

A malignant smile curled the lip of the count—"You know not," said he, "what a needy man will do for gold."

"The virtuous man will perish," replied Rosaviva, "rather than be enriched by guilt."

"Never having known the griping hand of poverty," resumed the count, "you dream not of the desperate deeds to which it urges; few are villains from nature—'tis strong necessity impels them on, and such are the strange chances of this mortal life, the very act that sinks one man to the lowest depths of infamy will lead another on to wealth and honour; such high reward, if right I augur, will crown my persevering spirit."

Rosaviva spoke not—her heart trembled at the idea of being in the power of a man who confessed himself ready to commit the worst actions to enrich himself.

The count rudely seized her hand, and, with a dark frown, said—"I go to London to settle an important business; the days of my absence are yours, to deliberate whether to yield a frank compliance with my suit, or that I should be compelled to force you to my wishes: farewell," continued he, pressing her resisting hand to his lips, "farewell, sweet Rosaviva! during my absence you will teach your heart to love me; and when we meet again, your lips, I trust, will greet me with smiles of welcome."

Cicely was at first not a little surprised that lady Rosaviva should treat with so much scorn, and refuse to be the wife of so fine a man as the count de Syllaric; but having heard from Rosaviva the history of her having been forced from her friends, and seeing her frequently kiss and weep over the little picture that hung on her bosom, she concluded that her heart was engaged; and growing herself weary of confinement in the turret, she entered into all Rosaviva's hatred of the count and lady Gertrude Montalban, and was, with

her, equally anxious to escape their power. Perceiving that lady Rosaviva spent most of her time in the oratory, Cicely bestowed much pains in rubbing the carved work of the altar, and in removing the dust from its niches; one morning, being busy in polishing the face of a cherub, a pannel of the altar slid down, and discovered a narrow flight of stairs; prompted by curiosity and the hope of escape, she descended, and found herself in a small closet; but observing no door, she placed her eye to a crack in the wall, and saw a chamber, wainscotted from the ceiling to the floor with black oak; a table and chair stood near the fireplace, and on the hearth lay the remains of logs of wood: while Cicely remained peeping through the crack, she heard a deep groan, which so startled her, that she flew up the stairs, and rushing to the bedchamber, informed lady Rosaviva of her discovery.

Eager to escape before the dreaded return of the count, Rosaviva threw on her clothes, and hastened to explore the descent described by Cicely, in the hope that



it might lead to liberty ; but having examined the closet, she was obliged to assent to Cicely's opinion, that it afforded no outlet, unless there was, as above, some sliding pannel ; she passed her hand carefully over the wall, but found no part that indicated an opening, though on applying her eye to the crevice, she discovered an object that, in spite of reason, gave her a shock that nearly produced fainting ; the dark wainscot painted to her remembrance the oak chamber mentioned with such terror by the old woman at the hut in the wood, and the pale, shadowy figure that stood leaning against the chimneypiece forcibly recalled the tall, thin, pale-faced gentleman described by Philip Wansworth.

Rosaviva hastened back to the oratory, almost convinced that she had beheld a spirit ; but fearful of alarming Cicely, she remained silent as to what she had seen in the oak chamber. This day passed even more heavily than any former one, and to add to her disquietude, she read in a paper brought up with her dinner, that a treaty of marriage was negotiating between the

right honourable the earl of Avondale and lady Gertrude Montalban.

“The sorceress has prevailed then,” said lady Rosaviva; “from my soul I pity thee, deluded Avondale!”

Unable to compose her mind, she wandered from the bedchamber to the oratory; and though aware of the terrible tenant of the oak chamber, she had an irresistible desire to behold his countenance again; having gained the closet, an indistinct murmur of voices struck her ear; on applying her eye to the crevice, she saw Mrs. Hill and Dessaines seated beside a blazing fire, and in the same melancholy attitude she had beheld him before, the tall, pale, thin gentleman, whom she now heard speaking; satisfied he was no ghost, she endeavoured to listen to their discourse, but only a few words were distinguishable, among which she caught, “prisoner—cruel Gertrude!” But whether these alluded to his own or her situation, she could not tell, till Mrs. Hill having said something which he did not appear to like, he slowly moved from the chimneypiece, and having come near the

wall, she plainly heard him say—"May Heaven pardon me for having loved that female fiend! but tell the wicked Gertrude, that the husband she has for four long years taught the credulous world to believe dead——"

These words were succeeded by a noise as if he had fallen; and as Rosaviva waited, in anxious dread that he had expired, she beheld him led between Mrs. Hill and Dessaines to a distant part of the room. A deep groan evinced to her his existence, and Rosaviva ascended to the oratory, convinced that she had seen the brother of lady Monteith; and that the dark walls of Norley Abbey contained another victim of persecution, in the person of Theodore Montalban, the husband whom lady Gertrude had taught the world to believe had died in France.

## CHAPTER V.



“ It is not rank or splendid fortune that ennobles man—it is the virtue of his soul; and this innate nobility, this mental grandeur, is often found where education has done little, and fortune less.”



“ A grateful mind sees neither difficulty nor danger, when an opportunity offers to discharge a part of its debt to a benefactor.”



“ The fiercest storms are succeeded by clear and sunny skies, and the hardest trials of adversity ultimately lead to happiness.”

THE discovery of the prisoner in the oak chamber, while it proved the enormous extent of lady Gertrude Montalban's guilt, and the absolute depravity and inhumanity of her character, filled the mind of the suffering lady Rosaviva with terror; for she reflected that the woman whose duplicity was equal to the execution of such dreadful projects, who was capable of holding out to the world a continual appearance of

sorrow for the death of a husband whom she held in close confinement, would not be withheld by conscientious scruples from the commission of any act of oppression or violence, she might consider expedient to promote her own interest or gratification. The domestics of the Abbey, she had great reason to believe, were all creatures of the same wicked stamp, the agents of her tyranny and cruelty, from whose humanity there was nothing to hope, but every thing to suspect, and every thing to fear.

“No,” said Rosaviva, in a voice of despondency, “from these slaves of vice, there is, alas! nothing to hope; no,” continued she, clasping her white hands, “I have nothing to expect but perpetual imprisonment or death.”

In this state of despair she was found by Cicely, who perceiving her faint, and scarcely able to reply to her questions, opened the casement; the evening was calm and mild, and yielding to the persuasion of the kind-hearted girl, Rosaviva leaned from the window to imbibe the fresh

air; silent and sad, she stood watching the motion of the water, and envying the freedom of its waves that were rolling far from the grey walls of Norley Abbey; as the melancholy idea that she was doomed never to quit its walls filled her mind, she fancied, on the breeze that swept past her, she heard the imperfect notes of a distant lute; her straining eye, as the sound approached nearer, discovered a boat, which seemed directing its course towards the Abbey. This was the first object Rosaviva had seen on the river since her imprisonment, and with eager joy she pointed it out to Cicely, as likely to contain beings whose humanity might either contrive means for their immediate escape, or, at any rate, convey to her friends information of her wretched situation: as she thus expressed her hopes, the boat drew so near, that, with almost frantic transport, she recognised the voices of her faithful Africans, Walter and Isabella, singing a Spanish ballad she had herself taught them in the peaceful shades of her own Delorica.

*SPANISH BALLAD.*

“The light in th’ turret to Ferdinand told  
Where his lady shed many a tear;  
The turret was high, but love made him bold,  
And he pray’d to his saint she might hear.

Lady, in thy turret high,  
May my lute but reach thine ear!  
Faithful love is hov’ring nigh—  
Lady, hope deliv’rance near.

“Oh, wave thy white hand! that signal will say,  
I am heard in the stillness of night;  
Thy prison I’ll scale, and bear thee away  
Ere the morning discovers thy flight.

Lady, in thy turret high,  
May my lute but reach thine ear!  
Faithful love is hov’ring nigh—  
Lady, hope deliv’rance near.”

The boat was now beneath the turret, and Rosaviva waving her handkerchief, repeated the last stanza; a shout of joy now ascended from the Africans, and Rosaviva beheld Walter moor his little vessel to the base of the turret, while Isabella held up a rope, which by signs she made them understand must be received at the window; this to Rosaviva appeared in-

possible, at the height they were from the water ; but Cicely, happy in the prospect of deliverance from the dismal Abbey, flew to the beds, and stripping them of their coverings, tied them together, and let the end drop in the reach of the Africans, who made fast the rope to the linen, which on a signal being given from the boat, was again drawn up by Rosaviva ; to the rope was attached a small billet, requesting she would secure the end of the rope, as by its assistance Walter proposed to scale the turret.

Rosaviva recognised the writing of her faithful Isabella, and with joyful haste, assisted by Cicely, made the rope secure ; she then passed the end from the casement, and in extreme agitation beheld Walter instantly seize the rope, and with surprising agility climb the steep and lofty side of the turret, till at length his face appeared at the casement. Cicely had never before seen a black man, and terrified at his colour, she uttered so loud a scream, that, startled at the outcry, he was near letting go the rope, which accident, by precipitating him from



such a height, would have put his life to extreme hazard.

Believing him the devil, Cicely clung to her lady, and began saying her prayers in a way so very ludicrous, that at another time would have been highly diverting; but Walter having gained the oratory, threw himself at the feet of Rosaviva, and bathed her hand with the tears of honest joy and grateful affection. Seeing her lady receive the African with such kindness and thankfulness to Heaven, and hearing her call him friend and deliverer, Cicely began to take courage, and to believe, though black, he was not Satan.

By Walter, lady Rosaviva was informed of all that had occurred since the eventful night of the masquerade; and her gratitude to Heaven burst forth in rapturous tears, when she learned that lord Monteith's return had removed every suspicion of impropriety from her character, and that the public opinion did her fame justice; she was also told of the earl of Avondale's journey to Paris in pursuit of her, and assured by Walter, that so far from in-

tending a marriage with lady Gertrude Montalban, she was his abhorrence, and strongly suspected by the earl, the Monteith family, and the town in general, of having separated her from the knowledge of her friends—"The earl of Avondale, dear lady," said Walter, "has been in a state of distraction ever since your absence—we have despaired of his life."

"His life!" repeated Rosaviva, "oh Heavens! is he then ill?"

"I ought not to have told this," said Walter, regretting his incautious speech; "but be comforted, dear lady—Heaven will spare the noble and virtuous Avondale."

"Oh, yes, I trust, I hope, Heaven will have mercy," said the weeping Rosaviva: "but tell me, Walter, how long has he been ill? what is the malady of the earl?"

"His malady, dear lady," replied Walter, "is sorrow for your loss; he has never been well since that fatal masquerade; he had determined to set off again in search of you, when he was seized with a fever,

which has for some time confined him to his chamber, where he is attended by the countess of Hartcourt with all the tender affection of a mother. Isabella and myself," continued Walter, "have been almost broken-hearted; and not being able to reconcile ourselves to your loss, though the earl of Avondale, and the countess of Hartcourt, and lord Monteith, have been, if possible, even kinder to us than ever, but we could not make ourselves content; so having concerted our plan, we resolved to set off without acquainting any one with our design, and to travel through every town and village in England, to visit every abbey and castle, playing on our lute, and singing the songs you had taught us, in the hope, wherever you were confined, you would hear us, and contrive some means to let us know we were recognized; and though we have long been disappointed, we never lost our confidence in Heaven's goodness, but constantly prayed that we might be made its humble instruments in your deliverance. Weary and hungry, the

night before last, we slept at the cottage of a poor widow, at the edge of a wood to the left of the Abbey."

"As sure as I live," said Cicely, "that cottage is my home, and a pleasant little spot it is, for all it is poor, for a honeysuckle grows all over the thatch, and comes in at the casement; did you see two little curly-headed boys with rosy cheeks, and a cat with one ear, and a lame jackdaw?"

"Yes," replied Walter, "and the good woman told me her name was Bridget Ashpool."

"Oh dear," interrupted Cicely, in a tone of joy, "that was my mother, sure enough; and I be so glad like, to hear from home—I hope, mother is well, and, the children purely?"

"They were all well yesterday," resumed Walter, "and it is to Bridget Ashpool I am indebted for my present happiness, in finding out the prison of our dear lady; for the account she gave of the strange conditions on which her daughter was hired at Norley Abbey, never to see or send to her family for six months, gave

me a suspicion that she was retained as an attendant on the lady whose loss was so lamented, and of whom we were in search. Isabella and myself were known to the count de Syllaric; therefore we did not dare approach the Abbey till it was dark; near the grand entrance we met an old fisherman, who told us, if we wanted charity, we were going to a bad place to expect it, for old Forrester was not at home; and as to that Jezebel, madam Hill, what she gave away was of a Sunday morning, before any body was up to see her charity. Finding the old fisherman so communicative, we told him we were not beggars, but had travelled many miles, in the hope of discovering our lady, who had been stolen away from her friends, and that we had reason to suppose she was held in confinement at Norley Abbey.

‘This is likely enough,’ said the old man, ‘for since the death of the late possessor, things go very queerly; why the Abbey is let to a strange outlandish count—and by all that I hear, there is very comical doings among them.’ He then told

us, his hut lay on the side of a hill, opposite the north turret, and that he had frequently seen lights there, when he had peeped abroad to look after the weather; but,' said the fisherman, 'as reports always went of that part of the Abbey being troubled by the spirits of the nuns and friars who were murdered there, by order of one of our kings, when I saw a light there at twelve or one o'clock, I said my prayers, and slunk back to my bed.'

'It is more probable,' observed Isabella, 'that some person inhabits the turret; I wish I could see this light.'

'Go with me to my hut,' said the old man; 'my dame will give you some broiled fish; and if you like to watch, why I warrant you will be gratified.'

"We accepted," said Walter, "the fisherman's kind offer; and having walked about half-a-mile from the Abbey, we crossed a bridge, thrown over a narrow part of the river, that led us to a road under the hill, where, in a sequestered nook, lay the hut, to which we were welcomed

by the fisherman's wife, who gave us a plentiful meal of broiled fish. I need not tell you, dear lady, that Isabella and myself watched for the light with beating hearts; and I having climbed a tree, could plainly discern a female figure close by this casement: we were now more than ever confirmed that you were a prisoner in the turret, and we offered all the money we possessed to the old man to procure us a boat.

“His own,” he said, “was leaky; but if we would wait till the next morning, he would take us to a person, who would not only lend us a boat, but would also assist us in any other way that he could be serviceable.”

“With this promise we were obliged to be content; and the fisherman having given us the best bed his hut afforded, a bundle of clean straw, he retired to his pallet, and left us to talk over our hopes, and to pray to Heaven for success. The next morning the fisherman's wife gave us a hearty breakfast of new milk and brown bread, which having thankfully eaten, we

Followed the old man to a farmhouse on the edge of the river, about four miles off. The owner of this farm is called William Forrester; he is the son of the steward of Norley Abbey; he looked pale and thin, and spoke of the count de Syllaric in terms of indignation: to him we related our design; he warmly praised our zeal, and promised us every assistance in his power. At his house we remained during the day, and this evening he is preparing a rope-ladder, that in case we should fortunately succeed in discovering you, we may to-morrow night bear you from confinement."

Walter ceased; and lady Rosaviva pressing his hand to her lips, exclaimed—"Best of friends, how shall I repay the fatigues you have undergone on my account—how remunerate my faithful Isabella for her affection?"

Walter sunk at her feet—"Dearest lady," said he, "to you and the Earl of Avondale we owe more than our lives—we owe the rescuing of our souls from error and ignorance; our gratitude can only



be evinced by risking our lives in your service : farewell, lady ! may all holy angels guard you till to-morrow ! to-night we return to William Forrester, whose kind and benevolent heart will rejoice in our success : farewell, dear lady ! at this hour to-morrow night expect us."

"Farewell, my good, my noble-minded Walter!" said lady Rosaviva; "may Heaven enable me to reward your generous attachment !"

Walter respectfully kissed the white hand she extended to him, and safely descended by the rope to the boat, where Isabella anxiously waited his coming, that she might hear how her lady looked, and what she said.

Rosaviva listened till she could no longer hear the rippling of the water made by the stroke of the oars ; she then sunk at the altar in humble thankfulness to Heaven, that had thus unexpectedly cheered her with a prospect of deliverance : but when she entered the drawing-room, she found Cicely weeping bitterly ; on inquiring the cause, the simple girl confessed

she wept from the fear of being left behind—"And when you are gone, my lady," said she, "how can I stay here all night by myself? I should certainly go stark-staring mad, with nothing in the world but fear."

"Do you not wish to remain at the Abbey?" asked Rosaviva.

"No, indeed, my lady," said Cicely; "not after you are gone; I should be so afraid of that count de Syllaric and his man."

"Would you then follow me?" returned Rosaviva.

"All the world over, dear lady," said Cicely, "if I could but let my mother know where I was gone."

"Comfort yourself, my good Cicely," returned Rosaviva; "you shall not be left behind; and I will take care your mother shall be informed of all you wish."

The tears of Cicely now gave way to smiles, and she diverted herself with the idea of the surprise madam Hill and the count would be in, when they found their prisoners had escaped.

The mind of Rosaviva was greatly relieved by the intelligence communicated

by Walter; the idea of being beloved by Avondale was rapture to her heart, and she anxiously anticipated the moment that should restore her to the protection of her friends. The mind of Cicely had been made happy by the assurances of lady Rosaviva, who had promised not only to take her from the Abbey, but also to retain her in her service, and she had fallen asleep full of gay prospects of the future.

But Rosaviva slept not; her thoughts, in the midst of her own happy prospects, dwelt on the prisoner in the oak chamber, to whom she wished, if possible, to convey the hope that his deliverance was at hand: full of this generous intention, she took the lamp that burned in her chamber, and raising the sliding pannel, descended to the closet; but on applying to the crevice in the wall, she could perceive no fire on the hearth, nor a ray of light in the chamber—"He is dead," said she; "unhappy man! Heaven has released thee from further oppression." Possessed with the opinion of his death, she again retired to her bed; but it was long before her reflections on the sufferings of the wretched

Theodore Montalban, and the crimes of his wife, allowed her to sleep.

The morning rose dark and tempestuous, and the rain fell in such torrents, that Rosaviva doubted the possibility of the boat's arrival; and poor Cicely loudly lamented the probable disappointment. In the afternoon it began to clear; their hopes again revived, and Rosaviva having secured her diamonds, sat near the casement of the oratory, waiting, with all the patience she could command, the arrival of the Africans; the rain had ceased, and the heavy clouds dispersed, but yet no boat appeared.

Cicely, who had stood anxiously watching, at length said—"You had better shut the casement, my lady—you will take cold—the boat will not come to-night."

"I fear not," said Rosaviva, smothering a sigh, "I fear not; yet I am loath to quit the window."

Another tedious half-hour wore away, and the sky became thickly studded with stars—"Oh, what a pity such a clear, fine

night as this should go by!" said Cicely; "to-morrow it may be bad weather again."

"Let us hope for the best," returned Rosaviva; "something extraordinary has happened, or my faithful Walter had been here."

As she spoke she leaned from the casement, but she saw only the glitter of the stars, reflected on the surface of the water; a tear trembled in her eye, at the probability of passing another melancholy night in the turrêt.

As to Cicely, she gave way to tears and lamentations, and protested it was her belief, that she should never quit the Abbey alive—"And this is a punishment for my pride," said she, "for young William Forrester wanted me to look after his dairy; but no, to be sure, that was not a place grand enough—I wanted to live at the Abbey; and now, I suppose, I shall die here."

"Do not despond," returned Rosaviva; "we are not out of the sight or reach of Providence."

At this moment Cicely put her head

from the casement, and beheld at a distance something dark on the water, which she pointed out to Rosaviva—"I am persuaded it is the boat," said she, "and we shall yet get away from this dismal old Abbey."

Rosaviva, with a palpitating heart, watched the distance, till at length she became convinced it was the boat; a few moments brought it beneath the turret, and with a voice of joy she answered to Walter's signal, who, by the assistance of a rope, again entered the oratory, bearing with him a ladder, which having properly secured, he safely conducted Rosaviva to the boat, where the affectionate Isabella, with tears of joy, received her.

Cicely was full of terror when she saw herself alone in the turret, but the kind-hearted Walter quickly remounted the ladder, and bade her hasten to liberty; and now another fear possessed her—she doubted whether he was not the devil, and if she gave him her hand, he might fly away with her, or throw her into the water and

drown her; but recollecting that she should die with fright if she remained alone in the turret, she consigned her body to his care, while she prayed for the safety of her soul as she descended from the casement: having placed her safely in the boat, Walter mounted again to the turret, from whence he released the ladder, and slid down by the single rope, which, when he gained the boat, he cut off as high as he could reach. The joy of the Africans, at the recovery of their mistress, expressed itself in tears, in kissing her robe, in falling on their knees, and joining in Rosaviva's prayer of praise and thankfulness.

To William Forrester, Rosaviva would have expressed her obligation, but he modestly declined the offer she made of remuneration, and informed her he had prepared a conveyance for herself and female attendants; and that it was his intention, with Walter, to be her guard.

The boat safely brought them to a little cove opposite William Forrester's house, into which, by his invitation, Rosaviva and her people entered and partook of refresh-

ment, which his hospitality had ordered to be prepared against their arrival.

At dawn of day, a light covered cart conveyed them to the next town, where a carriage more suitable to the rank of lady Rosaviva was procured; and they proceeded with all possible expedition to London, which they reached on the evening of the second day.

Never did human heart overflow with sincerer joy and gratitude than Rosaviva's, when she again found herself in the mansion of the countess of Hartcourt; when she again pressed to her bosom the little Octavian, who innocently, as he clasped her neck, inquired where she had been, and why she had left her own Octavian for so long a time?

The countess of Hartcourt, who yet watched the sick couch of the earl of Avondale, flew, on the first intimation of lady Rosaviva's return, to clasp her to a heart that felt for her a true affection, and that had never suffered appearances to prejudice her opinion, or lead to a suspicion of her virtue; she heard with horror and



amazement the guilt of lady Gertrude Montalban; and after having shewn all possible respect to William Forrester, and expressed the feelings of her benevolent heart to Walter and Isabella, she considered it highly proper to inform lord Monteith of the discovery made by lady Rosaviva in the oak chamber of Norley Abbey.

The injurious suspicions entertained by lady Monteith, against the virtue of the innocent Rosaviva had been expiated by severe self-reproach, and the real regret she felt at her mysterious concealment; but at the moment the countess of Hartcourt's note gave her the joyful news of her return, she was agitated and alarmed respecting the fate of her brother Theodore Montalban, of whose actual existence they had been taught to encourage the hope, by a letter which had been given to sir Henry Levison by lady Gertrude, in mistake for one on the subject of cutting down wood on the Norley domain for the repairs of the Abbey, about which lady Gertrude wished sir Henry to consult his solicitor.

This letter she had placed in his hands,

in the hurry of dressing for a ball, and it was not till he reached home that sir Henry perused its contents; it was written in bad French, and ran thus:—

---

“ At present I have but little hope of succeeding, for my fair prisoner continues inflexible, and treats my person, my persuasions and menaces, with inflexible scorn and proud defiance. I have made inquiry at every port in the kingdom, and can hear of no vessel bound to South America; if you can raise the sum I mentioned by the sale of the timber, I will carry her off to Italy immediately, where I shall use such means as shall make her glad to accept my hand. I will also take Montalban with me, whose confinement in the oak chamber has not conduced to his health; but though pale and emaciated, he does not appear likely to die; and much as I wish to get my prisoner off my hands, I cannot consent to administer the drug you recommend; it might, as you say, dispatch him quietly and easily, but villain as I confess

myself, there are crimes I shudder to think of, and could not execute ; in the midst of all my vices, I have stopped short of murder. You will let me know when you have determined about the timber. Arnaud has this morning had intelligence from Paris, that the old man has been taken, and is sentenced to be broken on the wheel—has not learned what has become of Lissette ; if she returns to England, she will betray more of the secrets of Norley Abbey than will be agreeable to your ladyship, or to

DE SYLLARIC."

---

The paper dropped from the fingers of sir Henry ; his blood curdled in his veins, as he remembered he had sought the hand of the vile lady Gertrude ; though vain, idle, and profligate, his heart had not yet lost all feeling of honour and humanity, and he stood aghast at the discovery of such complicated villany ; instead of preparing for the ball, to which he had promised to attend lady Gertrude, he hurried to lord Monteith, to whom he instantly

made known the contents of the important letter.

The surprise of this communication occasioned lady Monteith a long fainting-fit; but when a seasonable gush of tears had restored her to reason, she entreated her lord to lose no time in liberating her beloved brother and calumniated friend. Having taken measures to secure the person of lady Gertrude, on her return from the ball, lord Monteith and sir Henry Levison, with proper officers, concluded to set off for Norley Abbey, without apprising the earl of Avondale of the discovery so fortunately made by sir Henry, as they were fearful of agitating his spirits, in the present precarious state of his health, which seemed yet to fluctuate between life and death; but while the carriage was getting ready for their expedition, the joyful news was brought by Walter, of the fortunate deliverance of lady Rosaviva de Molines; while the manner in which it was effected was so modestly related by the African, that Monteith, pressing his sable hand, fervently exclaimed—“I honour you from

my soul, and shall, at every moment of my life, be proud to call you friend."

The tear of sensibility trembled in the eye of Walter, as lady Monteith placed on his finger a rich brilliant ring—"Accept it," said she, "my worthy Walter, not as a reward for the eminent service you have rendered us all, in the liberation of lady Rosaviva, but as a tribute to virtue—a memorial of the approbation bestowed on a good deed."

The heart of Walter felt oppressed; he had been solely actuated by his own grateful feelings, and the affection he bore to lady Rosaviva, from the knowledge he had of her virtue and amiable disposition: the satisfaction of having been instrumental in delivering her from oppression and miserable confinement, was to him sufficient recompence; he again beheld her sweet smile, and experienced her kind attention to himself and his Isabella, and forgot the fatigues and perils he had encountered for her sake: he wished not to accept lady Monteith's brilliant present; but fearful of offending, he suffered it to remain on his

finger, and gave lord Monteith the nearest route to Norley Abbey.

The remembrance of her unjust suspicions covered the cheek of lady Monteith with conscious blushes, and repentant tears mingled with her congratulations ; but the gentle sweetness of Rosaviva breathed only peace and forgiveness to her enemies; and those who had suffered their estimation of her character to be misled by appearance, she excused, by saying—" Man can only judge from what he sees, and if he errs from mistaken opinion, it must not be imputed to an uncharitable mind, but to the fallibility of human nature."

The discovery made by Cicely of the oak chamber at Norley, with all its subsequent circumstances, had reached the ear of lady Monteith, whose anxiety respecting her brother made her curious to learn every particular. Lady Rosaviva, though she believed the unhappy Montalban was no more, felt reluctant to destroy the hopes of a sister, whose affection had already anticipated the rapture of his resuscitation, and laid down plans for future happiness; she

therefore acknowledged she had seen him; had heard him speak, but told not of her last view of the oak chamber; the dark and cheerless appearance of which, together with the profound silence that reigned within it, gave her but too much reason to believe the unhappy sufferer reposed in the deep, unbroken sleep of death.

The heart of lady Monteith was now entirely cured of jealousy; and while her beautiful children, in playful contention, clung round lady Rosaviva, to receive her caresses, she gratefully confessed their obligations to her, who, during her own incapacity, had been to them a mother, and to herself a most true and faithful friend.

“My physicians, dearest madam,” said the earl of Avondale, to the countess of Hartcourt, as she sat beside him, on the morning after lady Rosaviva’s arrival in town, “my physicians recommend me to try the effect of a warmer climate; they are fearful, I perceive, of a decline: but in the present state of my mind, all climates will prove alike; my disorder is mental, and till a remedy can be found to ‘erase

the written troubles of the brain—pluck from the heart a rooted sorrow, it would nothing amend my health were I to quit England, for I should carry with me thoughts on which grief would feed.”

“I have no doubt,” replied the countess, “but the advice of your physicians has been given with a faithful and conscientious regard to the restoration of your health, precious to all your friends, but most particularly so to me; and were I not in actual possession of the very remedy requisite to the reestablishment of your health, I should most probably be among your first advocates for the trial of a warmer climate.”

The earl, with a faint smile, inquired—  
“And what, dear madam, is this panacea you boast to possess?”

“When you have finished your breakfast,” said the countess, “we will speak of this remedy; which, if I have any knowledge of your ailments, will effectually remove them.”

“I can take no more,” said Avondale; and he desired the servant who attended



to remove the things: being left alone with the countess, he took her hand, and with more animation than he had for weeks before displayed, he said—"Now for your prescription."

"Do you think," asked the countess, gaily, "your nerves are strong enough to bear an electrical experiment?"

"No doubt they are," replied the earl, "but I doubt its efficacy."

"Will you consent to admit the operator," said the countess.

"It will be of no avail," returned the earl; "this, dear madam, will be a useless experiment; electricity may produce a revolution in the blood, but cannot remove grief from the heart. No," continued he, in a tone of disappointment, "no, this will answer no purpose."

"You mistake, de Grey," said the countess; "it will answer one purpose at least—it will much oblige me, that you should see and converse with the operator, who is a very particular friend of mine, and from whose skill I expect your perfect recovery."

"It is sufficient, my dearest madam," returned the earl, "that you wish me to see a friend of yours; but for my recovery," continued he, with a melancholy sigh, "that, I fear, is far distant."

"Come, come," resumed the countess, "have better hope, for I have the greatest faith in my friend, whom, with your permission, I will introduce to your presence."

"What, this friend is in the house," said Avondale, "has been kept waiting; this ought not to have been—I am unprepared to admit a stranger, but any friend of yours——"

"Do not agitate yourself," returned the countess, "but be assured, I, to whom your health and happiness are dear, would require nothing of you but what I am certain will be conducive to both: can you not conceive it possible that my friend is the person whom, of all others, you are most desirous to behold?"

"Rosaviva!" said the earl; "confirm my health, my happiness, by that blessed sentence! say, my heart's beloved, my Rosaviva, is returned!"

“Be composed,” replied the countess, “or I must keep silence.”

“You ask more than nature will comply with,” said the earl, rising; “I am already well; for I read in your looks the confirmation of my wishes; Rosaviva is returned—let me go to her.”

“That must not be—you must not quit your apartment; be patient,” resumed the countess, “and I will lead hither the friend, from whose influence I anticipate the happiest effects.”

The countess then repaired to Rosaviva, who, with palpitating heart, waited in the library, listening to every passing footstep, and impatiently wishing to hear some account of Avondale, that noble friend and relation, who, since her confinement in Norley Abbey, she had discovered was most dear to her heart, beloved with a tenderness beyond what she had ever felt for Gonzalo de Baldivia; for the affection inspired by the earl of Avondale was not the passion of childhood, but the result of reason, the conviction of worth; trembling with timidity, and blushing with con-

sciousness, she suffered the countess of Hartcourt to lead her to the presence of Avondale, who falling at her feet, exclaimed—"Your absence, most adored of women, has taught me the impossibility of sustaining life uncheered by your smiles; dearest Rosaviva, my heart has been for years devotedly yours—on your favour depends my happiness, my life."

Rosaviva, though prepared by the countess for this declaration of his love, was unable to reply, till the pale countenance and agitated frame of Avondale reminded her, that his situation required the relief it was in her power to afford; having assisted the countess to lead him to the sofa, she seated herself beside him, and would have spoke her concern to see him so weak and indisposed; but with a look and tone of anguish, he said—"My indisposition will soon end."

"I trust it will," replied Rosaviva, extending her hand to him, "for on your health must depend the happiness of your friends."

The countess stole from the room.

"My friends," resumed the earl, "know that my affections are yours; and from your lips I must receive life or death."

"Live then, dear Avondale," said Rosaviva, "and surely it can be no infringement of modesty to say, that your noble qualities have won my heart; if the hand of Rosaviva can restore your health, live then for her sake, whose greatest happiness will be to promote yours."

The enraptured Avondale pressed her white hand to his lips; his eyes expressed the joyful feelings of his soul; but unable to give utterance to his transports, he sunk back on the sofa. In the utmost alarm, Rosaviva sprung to the bell, and rang for assistance; the countess of Hartcourt appeared, and the earl was, by their mutual efforts, soon restored to the sense, and expression, of his happiness.

The countess, with tears of joy, joined their hands, and invoked Heaven's choicest blessings on the heads of her favourites.

"A voyage to a warmer climate will

now be unnecessary," said the earl; "this lovely physician, by giving peace to my heart, will restore health."

In a conversation during their ride home, Rosaviva said to the countess—"It appears to me that I have been won without any solicitation on the part of Avondale; pray Heaven he may not, on reflection, despise his easy conquest."

"The heart of Willoughby de Grey," replied the countess, "is filled with noble, generous, and manly sentiments; fully sensible of the worth of the treasure he has obtained, he will know how to appreciate its value."

"On the death of the marquis de Baldivia," resumed Rosaviva, "I vowed I would never make a second choice, but remain during my life a widow; I fear I shall incur sin by breaking this vow."

The countess smiled—"It is better," said she, "not to vow at all; but be assured, my love, an adherence to yours would be a far greater sin than breaking it; for its performance would devote two

worthy and attached hearts to misery ; it would, in all probability, decree Avondale to death."

" Oh, Heaven forbid !" returned Rosaviva ; " his health and happiness are most precious to me."

The countess went over every circumstance of his affection for her, from the moment he found her picture, down to the present hour ; and with tears and smiles, Rosaviva acknowledged that Avondale was worthy to be beloved.

On their return home, they learned from Walter all that had occurred at lord Monteith's, with the added intelligence, that Arnaud Renaude, fearful of being brought to account for his share in the schemes of lady Gertrude Montalban, had fled from his house with every thing of value he possessed.

Again Rosaviva deplored the disappointment of lady Monteith's expectations, believing that the unfortunate Theodore had breathed his last, previous to her escape from Norley Abbey.

The first person interrogated on the sub-

ject of this unhappy young man was the steward, old Forrester, who was overtaken on his way to the Abbey by lord Monteith and his party; old Forrester declared he had no knowledge of any person being confined in the oak chamber, but if there was, lady Gertrude herself, or the count de Syllaric, could give the best information, and they were luckily at the Abbey at that present time, for her ladyship's carriage had passed him on the road.

On receiving this intimation, lord Monteith and his friends ceased to interrogate the old man, and hastened with their swiftest speed to the Abbey; on their arrival they entered the hall without ceremony, and sir Henry, accustomed to the apartments, led the way to that in which lady Gertrude usually sat; here they found her ladyship in close debate with count de Syllaric.

Lord Monteith was the first person who entered, and the eye of lady Gertrude no sooner recognised this unwelcome visitor, than uttering a shriek, she grasped the



arm of de Syllaric, exclaiming—"Villain, monster! you have betrayed me."

As the rest of the party rushed into the room, de Syllaric looked aghast; and turning to lord Monteith, with affected astonishment, inquired what their abrupt intrusion meant?

"Wretches!" said lord Monteith, "I come not to seek lady Rosaviva de Molines; for happily she has escaped your infernal stratagems, and is again safe in the protection of those friends whose minds your arts were never able to prejudice against her; I come to liberate the wretched Theodore Montalban, the man whose youth, wicked, detestable woman! you have blighted."

"The hour he warned me of is arrived," said lady Gertrude, with a look of horror; "well, let it come: but for thee, base coward!" addressing de Syllaric, "for thee, mean betrayer——"

"Reproach him not," said sir Henry Levison, "with ignominy he has not merited; he will yet have enough to answer—lady Gertrude, you have been the

betrayed of your own machinations; the letter you gave me, instead of being the one that related to cutting down timber on the Norley domain, was an epistle from the count de Syllaric, and disclosed——”

“ Perpetual dumbness seize you !” exclaimed lady Gertrude, darting on him a look of fury ; “ busy, meddling coxcomb ! brainless, heartless wretch ! always contemptible in my eyes, now hateful ! but think not to enjoy your triumph over me ; though baffled in my present schemes, you yet may learn what an enraged, disappointed woman is capable of.”

She was then quitting the apartment, but lord Monteith turning to the police officers, bade them keep a strict guard over her ladyship, and to secure the count de Syllaric in another apartment ; these orders were instantly obeyed. Lord Monteith then proceeded with sir Henry Lesson to the housekeeper’s room, where they found Dessaines, Mrs. Hill, and Alice, very comfortably seated, taking their wine.

Mrs. Hill shrieked, and let fall the glass

she was conveying to her mouth, at the sight of these unwelcome intruders ; Dessaines would have slunk away, but lord Monteith, seizing the trembling wretch, insisted on being conducted instantly to the oak chamber.

“ Mercy on us ! ” said Alice, looking wildly, “ to the oak chamber ! why, nobody ever goes near the door, for fear of seeing the spirit—the oak chamber ! as I am a Christian woman, I would not go into the oak chamber by daylight, much less at this hour, if I should have all the gold that they say is buried in the vaults.”

“ Is this art or ignorance ? ” asked sir Henry Levison.

“ No matter which,” returned lord Monteith ; “ I insist on their all three attending us to the oak chamber.”

Dessaines recovering his natural assurance, said he had no objection to conduct their lordships—“ I have only acted by the orders of lady Gertrude Montalban, and the count, my master,” said he.

“ No, to be sure, you have not,” rejoined

Mrs. Hill, pertly, "nor I neither; and if the gentleman in the oak chamber has any thing to complain of——"

"Gentleman!" repeated Alice; "why is there a living gentleman there, and not a spirit, after all? Why what a fool you have made me, Mrs. Hill!"

"No, you were ready made to my hands," replied Mrs. Hill. "I found it necessary to encourage your belief of the oak chamber being haunted, to keep you from prying into what it was not necessary for you to know."

"Lead on, sir," said lord Monteith to Dessaines; "young woman, we can dispense with your attendance."

But the fears of Alice being removed, her curiosity became too strong to be resisted, and she followed the party up the grand staircase. A small door behind a heavy pillar in the armoury admitted them to the oak chamber, the dismal appearance of which was sufficient to strike horror on the senses, and inspire a belief of supernatural visitants. The roof and sides of the chamber were composed of black

oak, carved in the most hideous shapes—two deformed figures with grinning heads supported the chimneypiece, over which was carved the representation of a monstrous dragon, into whose yawning jaws the adversary of mankind was driving the victims of his delusions; in an alcove at the end of the chamber stood an old-fashioned bed, of dark blue cloth, and the curtains, that drew over a narrow-pointed window almost covered with ivy, were of the same dark, heavy material; the embers were yet glowing on the hearth, and a chair and table stood near the fireplace; but all within the chamber was silence and vacuity.

Monteith and sir Henry Levison shuddered, as they beheld the dreary prison, in which the base, unfeeling lady Gertrude had confined her husband.

“Where is Montalban? where is the victim of this female fiend’s cruelty?” said Monteith.

Mrs. Hill approached the bed, and drawing back the curtain, they beheld the pale, emaciated form of Theodore Montalban;

he was asleep. Alice recoiled in terror from a countenance which she declared looked quite ghostly. The light falling on his eyelids, Theodore awoke, and calling Dessaines by name, requested him to give him a glass of water; having poured out the water, lord Monteith took it from Dessaines, and presented it to the sufferer: the thin hand of Theodore was stretched out to receive the glass; when his eyes rested on the pitiful countenance of the husband of his sister, as if doubtful of the reality of what he beheld, he raised himself from the pillow, and dashing aside the long, matted locks that hung wildly over his face, he gazed for a moment with an intenseness that seemed to strain his eyeballs beyond their usual dimensions, and then exclaimed —“ What mockery is this? do I still dream? for in the fevered visions of the night, I frequently behold my child, my sister, and Monteith—can my distempered brain create this phantom? yes, yes, it must be so; for in this world the miserable Montalban is separated for ever from

all the objects dear to his affections—cruel, cruel Gertrude! this is the reward of my unbounded love, my misplaced confidence—these have doomed me to wear out life in lingering wretchedness—to breathe my last sigh in this dismal prison.”

Lord Monteith and sir Henry Levison advanced; Monteith took the hand of Montalban, and affectionately pressing it, said—“Look up, Montalban; you are no longer a prisoner; behold your friends, your deliverers.”

For a moment the unhappy Theodore seemed insensible to the declaration of Monteith; but bursting into tears, he at length threw himself into the arms of his friends, and entreated, if he was indeed at liberty, that he might be allowed to quit that horrid chamber, which he had never been suffered to leave since his arrival at the Abbey.

Supported by Monteith and sir Henry, he was borne to an apartment adjoining the hall; here, as he reclined on a couch, he inquired after his child and his sister, and was told they were both well; he then

spoke of his wife, and being told she was at the Abbey, he begged they might set off immediately, as it was his wish never again to behold the woman whose vices had not only made him a prisoner, but had also meditated his death.

It was not without evident uneasiness he learned it was impossible they could quit the Abbey before morning; but at length, having first taken some refreshment, he consented to try to sleep, on the faithful promise of lord Monteith and sir Henry Levison not leaving the room: wearied and exhausted with the thousand questions he had asked, Theodore sunk into a slumber, and Monteith and sir Henry, in great chairs, before a blazing fire, were preparing to follow his example, when they were roused by Alice, with the news that lady Gertrude was dead; shocked and astonished, lord Monteith wished to hear the particulars of so sudden a dissolution; but Alice, pale as ashes, and shaking with fear, could only say—"For all she was a lady, she thought nothing at all about her sinful soul, which, if the parson



was to be believed, was certainly gone to the bad place ; for, lack-a-day !” continued Alice, shuddering, “ the wicked sinner has poisoned herself.”

Requesting the trembling Alice to remain with sir Henry Levison and Mr. Montalban, lord Monteith hastened to the apartment where he had left lady Gertrude ; the first object he saw was Mrs. Hill in fits, so strong as to require Des-saines and two more men to hold her ; at the upper end of the room, with her head thrown back against the wall, sat the corpse of lady Gertrude, stiff and cold, her eyes and mouth frightfully distended—her face and neck turning black, the effect of the poisonous drug she had swallowed, the white sediment of which remained in the glass beside her ; never was a more terrific spectacle, and Monteith shuddered as he traced on her countenance the malignant passions that had hurried her to the commission of suicide—“ Wretched woman,” said he, “ thy power to do evil has terminated fearfully ; thou art gone to give an account of a life spent in the violation of

all laws, human and divine; with thine own desperate hand thou hast cut asunder the link that bound thee to Montalban; and happy indeed were the release, did it not place thine own soul in tremendous peril, and entail disgrace on thy lovely, innocent child."

Having given the necessary orders respecting the body of lady Gertrude, Monteith was returning to his friends, when it was discovered that the count de Syllaric had escaped at the imminent risk of his neck from the chamber in which he had been confined; the police-officers immediately pursued him, but he eluded their search, and got off, as they supposed, to France.

The next morning, Theodore Montalban suffered Dessaines to cut his hair, and render his appearance fit for the world, from which he had been so long shut out. It was at the intercession of Montalban, that Mrs. Hill was suffered to depart from the Abbey—"Her heart," said Theodore, "is hard, and her mind selfish and venal; but Heaven may amend both—let her go in peace, and if she can, repent."

Happy to get off so easily, Mrs. Hill gathered all she could collect together, and left her office of housekeeper to the timid Alice, who had never been admitted to a participation of the secrets of the oak chamber; she had indeed assisted to decoy lady Rosaviva from the masquerade, but she had been seduced to lend her aid in the plot by a large bribe, and by being persuaded that lady Rosaviva was really attached to the count de Syllaric, only her friends wished to persuade her into a marriage with the earl of Avondale.

Leaving the Abbey, with the charge of lady Gertrude's funeral, to the care of old Forrester and Alice, lord Monteith, sir Henry Levison, and Montalban, began their return to London, taking with them Dessaines, who was promised reward and liberation, on his giving a full and veritable account of all he knew respecting the confinement of Mr. Montalban, and the connexion of lady Gertrude with the count de Syllaric.

The resuscitation of Theodore Montalban was an event that afforded his amiable

sister the sincerest joy, who, while she clasped him fondly to her heart, gave Heaven mental thanks that he was released from his fiendlike wife, though at the same moment she shuddered to reflect by what horrible means lady Gertrude had terminated her guilty life; and she at once conceived the propriety of concealing, both from her brother and Laurette, a circumstance so distressing and afflictive.

The consolations of his numerous friends, the affectionate solicitude of lady Monteth, and the dutiful attention and tenderness of his beautiful and amiable child, restored peace to the heart of Montalban; he was shocked and grieved to hear of the sudden death of lady Gertrude, but his was not the sorrow of a heart still doating with romantic fondness, but the regret of charity, that wept to think a fellow-creature had been cut off in the actual commission of sin, in the plenitude of guilt: but his friend, the earl of Avondale, was again abroad, restored to health and happiness; and in contemplating his prospect of felicity in an union with lady Rosaviva de

Molines, Theodore forgot his own sadness, and endeavoured to take part in the preparations that were making for their marriage.

In the meantime, Dessaines made a disclosure of all he knew relative to the transactions of lady Gertrude Montalban and de Syllaric, the substance of which was confirmed by Montalban, as far as had come under his cognizance.

The man known by the title of count de Syllaric had in reality no right to the rank he assumed, he being the eldest son of Pierre Renaude, who at a very early age had been taken into the service of the real count de Syllaric, who finding him acute and intelligent, took him abroad with him in quality of his valet, in which situation he explored, with the count, the vast territory of Asia, and all the habitable parts of Africa; he then returned with the count to Europe, and travelled through Russia, Germany, Prussia, Poland, Spain, and Italy, where the count remained many years, and at length died by the hand of a hired assassin, but not before he made a

will, in which he consigned the charge of his effects to his valet, Jaques Renaude, in whose fidelity he had the utmost confidence, and whose services he rewarded with a handsome legacy.

Jaques Renaude was commanded by the expiring count to return to France, and convey his effects to his family, in the department of Seine and Oise, immediately after his decease. Hitherto Jaques Renaude had conducted himself honestly and faithfully, and had merited the confidence of his late master; but the property now placed in his absolute trust, comprising a large sum of money and some valuable jewels, was too great a temptation for a mind naturally inclined to cupidity; he was not long in forming the resolution that stamped him a villain; he destroyed the count's will, quitted Italy, assumed the title of de Syllarie, and appropriated to himself the whole of the effects confided to his charge. Instead of visiting the department of Seine and Oise, he repaired immediately to Paris, where his assumed title and splendid appearance soon intro-

duced him to the first society ; it was here his acquaintance commenced with the unfortunate Theodore Montalban, and lady Gertrude, tired of her romantic, sentimental husband, became pleased with the flatteries of this wretch ; and at length, forgetful of the respect due to virtue and the marriage vow, suffered him to obtain a criminal ascendancy over her.

A passion for gambling soon reduced the count to his last louis d'or ; but though he made known his distresses to lady Gertrude, she was either unable or unwilling to remove the poverty that was staring him in the face ; in his pecuniary embarrassments he remembered his father, to whom he repaired without further delay ; but though Pierre Renaude immediately recognised his son, he was in no situation to support him, for he had rendered himself so obnoxious to the government, that he was obliged to fly his country to preserve his life.

While Jaques debated whether he should not also follow the precedent of his father, and try his fortune in England, Mon-

talban, finding the noise and bustle of Paris impede, rather than accelerate his cure, had prepared for his departure to an elegant little villa, delightfully situated in the department of Vaucluse; understanding from the count that he was under some disagreeable embarrassments, he generously, though unfortunately, gave him an invitation to retire with him to rural solitude, till his affairs could be arranged to his satisfaction. This proposal was by no means pleasing to lady Gertrude, who wished to get rid of a man whose attentions were become disagreeable, and whose poverty she despised; but de Syllaric was not to be repulsed or deterred by her frowns and look of scorn—he joyfully accepted the place Montalban offered him in his carriage, and without scruple took possession of an apartment in his house, and a plate at his table.

But lovely as was the situation of the villa, its peace and seclusion soon wearied lady Gertrude, who, from entreaties and persuasions, at last grew clamorous in her expressions of dislike to being buried in



the country, and loud in the demand of returning to Paris. It was now that the eyes of Montalban were opened; he saw the deformities of her mind, and wished, too late, that he had never married her; his circumstances were by no means equal to the expence of a residence at Paris, and with manly fortitude he resisted the desire of lady Gertrude, foreseeing his acquiescence would involve his little fortune beyond the possibility of retrieving. Unequal to engage in perpetual disputes, his health grew worse, and lady Gertrude declaring her inability to nurse a sick husband, separated herself from his chamber. It was at this period she meditated the horrid design to destroy her husband, and resolved to engage de Syllaric to aid her with his knowledge in poisons; full of this project, she one night left her bed and repaired to the chamber of the count, where, to her surprise, she found a lamp burning on a table, which was spread with letters and papers: her curiosity, the count not being there, led her to examine the papers, from the contents of which she soon

learned the origin and history of the man with whom she had debased her rank, and dishonoured her husband: finding he did not return, she resolved to seek him, for possessed as she now was of his dearest secrets, she supposed him so completely in her power, that he would not dare refuse to aid her in getting rid of a husband whom she considered a hateful encumbrance.

Proceeding first to the library, she beheld de Syllaric in the act of rifling Montalban's cabinet, in which he knew he usually kept his money, and papers of consequence; he had forced the lock, and the drawers which he had emptied in search of cash lay beside him—"Villain, robber! you are detected," exclaimed lady Gertrude, advancing to the bell, "and soon shall the deluded Montalban and his household be acquainted with the true character of Jaques Renaude, the faithful valet of the count de Syllaric."

"Proceed," said he, nothing daunted by the menace she held out, "proceed, and convince Montalban and his household of the immaculate purity of your own cha-

racter; consider your present appearance and mine, just arisen from our beds, and think what credence you are likely to obtain, when I shall throw myself on the mercy of Montalban, confess with penitence our criminal intimacy, and swear I was led hither by you to rob him."

Lady Gertrude sunk on a chair; she saw the consummate art of the villain before her; and confessing his superiority, was afraid to irritate him to her destruction.

"If I had found money in the cabinet, as I expected," said de Syllaric, replacing the drawers, "I had released you from an object so hateful as myself; but not being able to depart without cash, you must yet be condemned to bear with my presence till some lucky chance sets us both at liberty. We will now," continued he, "retire to our separate chambers; and if you are wise, you will bury the discoveries of this night in oblivion."

The next day brought lady Gertrude the intelligence of her father's death, and the property to which she succeeded by that event. It was now she proposed to the

count to poison Montalban ; but deep as he had engaged in crime, he would not proceed to murder, but suggested the ease with which she might imprison her husband in Norley Abbey, where he would bind himself to be his keeper, while she, passing for a widow, might pursue her own plans without molestation.

To this scheme lady Gertrude yielded assent ; opium was administered in the food and medicines of Montalban, till he became so stupified that he could offer neither opposition nor resistance to the detestable machinations of his wife. Dessaines and Arnaud Renaude, already acquainted with the history of the count de Syllaric, assisted to convey the unhappy Montalban to England. Dessaines was retained at Norley Abbey by the fictitious count de Syllaric, while Arnaud Renaude joined his father, and the innocent Lisette, who was the offspring of Pierre Renaude's second marriage, and born some years after Jaques Renaude had left France with the real count de Syllaric, and never having heard of any brother except

Arnaud, was perfectly unconscious of the affinity subsisting between herself and the wretch, who had held out insinuations against her virtue at Norley Abbey—insinuations which, she then believed, had separated her for ever from the sight and affection of William Forrester.

On the return of colonel Sligo and his lady from France, they met the unhappy Lissette at Calais, who, after the dreadful fate of her father, fled from Paris, and in a state of great poverty had reached the house of a distant relation who kept an hotel at Calais; the colonel's lady was again in want of a *femme-de-chambre*, and pleased with the innocent countenance and mild manners of Lissette, engaged her to go to England.

On the very day after their arrival in London, Lissette and William Forrester met in the street; a mutual explanation took place, and in the space of a short month, liberally portioned by lord Monteth, Lissette was made the happy wife of William Forrester, who departed for his own farm, loaded with the grateful gifts

of the earl of Avondale and lady Rosaviva de Molines.

On the day of their departure from London, an account appeared in the papers of the bodies of two men being cast ashore at St. Maloes, where the wreck of a fishing-smack had also been picked up; from the description given of the men, it appeared they were the two Renaudes, Jaques and Arnaud, who had thus terminated lives distinguished by crime, and devoted to guilt: the noble friends of Mrs. Forrester rejoiced that she was out of the way of learning the fate of these wretched men, who, though vile in principle, and of base character, were yet her brothers.

The marriage of the earl of Avondale with lady Rosaviva de Molines was celebrated with all possible magnificence, amidst the warm gratulations and sincere good wishes of their mutual friends. On their return to Avondale House, Walter and Isabella were admitted to the presence of the noble pair; their honest, artless joy was expressed in tearful emotion, as they

alternately pressed the hands of the earl and Rosaviva to their lips—"May the God of all good Christians ever guard and shower upon you all the blessings of this happy country!" was the short, but emphatic prayer of the faithful Africans.

Lady Avondale took from her own neck a string of rich pearls, which she hung on the polished bosom of Isabella; and pressing her rosy lips on her ebon cheek, she said—"The prayer proceeding from hearts so good and virtuous will, I doubt not, reach the ear of Heaven."

The earl placed in the hands of Walter a parchment, saying—"Accept this, Walter, not as the reward of services which our gratitude can never sufficiently repay, but as the gift of friendship; that deed secures to you the perpetual possession of a pleasant cottage, and its surrounding lands, situate in the fruitful county of Devon. There, Walter, let your child be born, that while you enjoy the delicious emotions of paternal love, you may look around you content in happy independence: the land," continued the earl, "is good, and with

your industry, and under your cultivation, will become a little paradise."

"It will become the resemblance of our native home," said Isabella; "and while we sit under the shade of the trees, and tell each of the bounty of our benefactors, we will bless our gracious Creator, and sigh no more for the bowers of the coral island."

Walter and Isabella having retired, the company expressed the feelings they had excited, according their faithful attachment, and simple virtues, warm approbation.

"It has been my fate," replied the earl of Avondale, "to see these Africans in situations of severe trial; I have witnessed their patience, their forbearance, and their humanity; and from my knowledge of the African character, I am convinced that education alone is wanted to render them capable of the sublimest efforts of genius, and make their hearts, naturally humane and tender, the temple of every exalted virtue; when I shall hereafter relate to you the history of Zoan and Ora, now, by the rite



of Christianity, named Walter and Isabella, you will own these Africans are 'equalled by few Europeans.'

**FINIS.**







